# THE UNIVERSITY DEPOLITICIZED: RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE IN AN AUTHORITARIAN STATE

by

Joana Catherine Odencrantz

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# STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The dissertation of Joana Catherine Odencrantz

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Edward Epstein** | , Chair | **8/24/2011** Date Approved |
| **Peregrine Schwartz-Shea** | , Member | **8/24/2011** Date Approved |
| **John Francis** | , Member | **8/24/2011** Date Approved |
| **Claudio Holzner** | , Member | **8/24/2011** Date Approved |
| **Peter Sluglett** | , Member | **8/24/2011** Date Approved |

and by **James Gosling** , Chair of the Department of **Political Science**

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The GraduateSchool.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the impact of an authoritarian state on the university as represented by the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University in Cairo, Egypt. I examine how academics negotiate their tasks of acquiring, disseminating and producing knowledge within the confines of an authoritarian state. *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* argues that a knowledge society, consisting of the acquisition, dissemination, and production of knowledge is needed to overcome developmental lags within the Arab Middle East. My dissertation explores that argument within the microcosm of the knowledge society as represented by the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. Most critically I ask the question of how the university was depoliticized by an authoritarian state. Hence, my work begins to uncover the irrelevance to the Egyptian Revolution and ouster of President Husni Mubarak in 2011. My dissertation reveals how an authoritarian state depoliticizes a university and improves our understanding of the utility of elements of the social capital concept. Known metaphorically as bridges and holes, the linkages or mechanisms (bridges) that span networks that are not affiliated with one another (holes) can inhibit or support change as well as inhibit or promote the introduction of new knowledge and resources. It is this last conceptual finding that holds most promise for future research in diverse settings.

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# CHAPTER 1

# RESEARCH FOCUS AND METHOD

## Introduction

The alleys of Cairo are quite narrow. Despite the narrowness, cars park on both sides of the alleys. Navigating the exceedingly narrow remaining space in a car becomes a truly daring feat. My cabdriver, the father of an Egyptian friend, had parked in one of these narrow alleys off of *Tahrir* Square and getting out of the parking space and alley without hitting another car appeared to me to be quite impossible. How would we get out?

As the cabdriver began the excruciatingly tiny back and forth maneuvering of the cab to get out without hitting another car, three men appeared to direct him out of the space. During the fifteen minutes we spent attempting to get out and straighten the cab enough to get through the barely car-sized space left by the parked cars, two more men began helping the cabdriver. After twenty minutes of trying to maneuver the cab with the help of five other men without success, the five men picked up the back of the cab to straighten it out and we were finally free. The spontaneous help offered to the cabdriver by these five men contrasted sharply with the comments of a professor I had recently

interviewed. The professor had offered the opinion that the spontaneous cooperation provided by the social capital of the United States was unavailable and unlikely in Egypt. Far more likely, he offered, was the elite cooperation found in France.

While my research did demonstrate intraelite social capital efforts to reach out to the community, intellectuals and other elites appeared unable to tap into the spontaneous cooperation found on the streets of Cairo. The divide between academics and the *sha'abi*[1] is physically demonstrated by the fences and gates--manned by security personnel that surround the universities—making them isolated oases within the teeming city.

Had I stumbled on the reason why, despite high apparent levels of social capital, Egypt remains economically stagnant and far from democratic? It could not be that easy and, indeed, it is not. Within this dissertation I explore how academics function within the confines of an authoritarian state. My interviews with academics[2] were intended to elicit their view points and understand how they functioned and negotiated their quest for knowledge despite the controls placed on the university from an authoritarian state that sought political quiescence and an academy that would serve regime power maintenance strategies.

My research begins to uncover what impacts the state can have on the university through interviews conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University. My study promotes our understanding of the lived experience of my interview subjects rather than generalizations and causal connections. Although my methods did not seek to test causal relationships, my research does uncover how the

[1] Literally refers to the people and carries with it the connotation of popular or of the people.
[2] Please see questions in English and in Arabic in the Appendix.

university was depoliticized by an authoritarian state and left mute and irrelevant during the dramatic events in Tahrir Square where the people demanded and gained the ouster of Hosni Mubarak.

## The Question

This dissertation explores the impact of an authoritarian state upon the university as represented by the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University, Egypt. This dissertation seeks to examine how the Egyptian authoritarian state successfully depoliticized the university. Egyptian universities were, largely, irrelevant to the recent and dramatic events of the Arab Spring wherein the people demanded and obtained the ouster of longtime President Hosni Mubarak. I argue that the irrelevance of the university to the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 is directly related to the success of an authoritarian state's depoliticization and control of the university.

The university tasks, so well delineated by the *2003 Arab Human Development Report* of knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production have been inhibited by an authoritarian state. The academic faculty, amongst those I interviewed, faces serious state-driven constraints with regard to their professional missions of teaching and scholarly research. Throughout this dissertation, I will show that both professors and graduate students depoliticize as much as possible in order to undertake their teaching responsibilities and engage in scholarly research. Structurally-driven theories and the social capital concept facilitate our understanding of the obstacles to the knowledge-driven mission of academics within an authoritarian state such as Egypt. These same concepts also promote our understanding of how obstacles are negotiated as well as

buttressing our understanding and insight as to how academics seek alternative means of pursuing knowledge.

Other studies have undertaken the issue of state limitations on academic freedom.[3] My work investigates how the limitations on the university by an authoritarian state, as represented by the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Cairo University, inhibit the university's interaction with the broader Egyptian public. As bridging social capital did play a role in the demonstrators' successful ouster of President Hosni Mubarak and his most visible cronies, the inability of academics to build bridging social capital has been thrown into sharp relief. The knowledge needed to strategize mass, cross-sectional demonstrations was not gained at Egyptian universities nor did they play a role as an essential site of organization. Therefore, a related question is the role played by societal forces to gain the knowledge needed to organize opposition. I will address that issue in a chapter that examines the Egyptian revolution of 2011.

My work aims to build an understanding of how the university was depoliticized. In Chapter 3, I discuss the history of Egyptian education generally as well as of Cairo University specifically. Attempts to harness the academy for political purposes by Nasser and then Sadat backfired when opposition forces were also empowered. Both introduced security and surveillance measures when students and faculty proved too difficult to control. The Mubarak regime's control mechanisms of security, surveillance, and strategic appointments masterfully completed the depoliticization of the university and academic found that an apolitical posture served career advancement as is demonstrated throughout my interviews.

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[3] "Reading Between the "Red Lines": The Repression of Academic Freedom at Egyptian Universities," Human Rights Watch 17(June,2005),http://www.mafhoum.com/press8/243S27.pdf

A further contribution from my dissertation is the role played by metaphorical bridges and holes used in the social capital literature. While I will explain these concepts at length in Chapter 2, the importance of bridges or links across structural holes of nonrelated networks permeates my findings. The concepts of bridges and holes promote our understanding of how change does or does not occur. Bridging mechanisms and the holes they may span explains the value of networks to the influx of new knowledge while the lack of any such bridging mechanism helps explain failures to find the knowledge or resources needed for change to occur.

## Methodology

My question seeks to uncover how the university has been impacted by the efforts of an authoritarian state to eliminate political opposition. I used a qualitative case study method in order to better understand and decipher the context of the Faculty of Political Science and Economics. This type of case study privileges meaning and reflexivity over generalization. My questions intended to begin a discussion rather than lead interview subjects in a specific direction. I wanted to uncover the reality as understood by members of the Faculty. The qualitative single site case study method centers upon interpretation and human generated understandings within a context rather than an assessment of causal relationships.[4] Use of this particular methodology elicited a great deal of information suggesting that professors found an apolitical professional profile most conducive to carrying out their academic mission of acquiring knowledge, disseminating learning, and producing research. The qualitative case study method,

[4] A broader discussion of methodological differences in case studies can be found in DvoraYanow, Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Maria Jose Frietas, "Case Study Research in Political Science," in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, ed. Albert Mills, GarielleDurepos, and EldenWieber (Sage, 2009), 108-113.

employed for my research, engendered an appreciation for the environmental context wherein academics interviewed must work and carry out academic tasks such as those indicated by the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*'s understanding of a knowledge society.

## Case Study

My study could have taken place in any of the Arab countries covered by the *Arab Human Development Reports*. I chose Egypt and the Faculty of Economics and Political Science a for several reasons including the perception of Egypt as a leader in the Arab World, feasibility and access, as well as the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*'s argument that the development in the sciences was preceded by developments in the humanities, law, and social sciences. I will explain these in greater detail in what follows.

First, Egypt has long been perceived as a leader and initiator of change amongst Arab countries. The Arab saying that "Cairo writes, Beirut publishes, and Baghdad reads" exemplifies Egypt's perceived intellectual leadership. More broadly it is also often said that "as Egypt goes, so goes the rest of the Arab world." Although Egypt was to the point of stagnation under the Mubarak regime, the perception has more than a little truth behind it. Politically, President Nasser's brand of Arab nationalism was particularly potent and Egypt an acknowledged Arab leader while for Westerners Egypt led by becoming the first Arab country to make peace with Israel under the rule of President Sadat.

Egypt, the most populous Arab country, is a country of many firsts in the Arab world. While any Arab country would have sufficed for my research, Egypt was and is a country

of influence due to its size and history. Egypt is important as bell weather for the Arab world.

*The Arab Human Development Reports* were eminently suitable to bridge what could be done with a politically relevant question that would use the time and contacts that I had available. The initial *Arab Human Development Report*, a publication of the United Nations Development Programme, described three deficiencies that plagued the Arab world and hindered development.[5] Of these, the knowledge deficit was the most apposite to examining how political authoritarianism might impact the university's ability to play a role as an incubator of ideas concerning political reform.

The Faculty of Economics and Political Science was relevant to an examination of the knowledge deficit. The authors of the *2003 Arab Human Development Report* that further explored the ramifications of the knowledge deficit argue that the Islamic Golden Age was preceded by developments in linguistics, law, and social sciences.*The Report* notes of the scholarly renaissance that marked the Abbasid Empire that "The third factor contributing to the scientific renaissance was that was preceded by a renaissance in the humanities and the social sciences."[6]

Cairo University was established in 1908 as the first modern university in Egypt that would teach subjects beyond the religious sphere. One of the first modern universities to

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[5]United Nations Development Programme.*Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations.* Contributing Authors: M. Abido, A. A. Ali, N. Ali, M. M. Al-Imam, M. Al-Khalidi, F. Al-Allaghi, M. K Al-Sayed, M. Badawi, G. Corm, M.Dewidar, I. Elbadawi, A. El-Bayoumi, O. El-Kholy, F. El-Zanaty, M. Amin Faris, N. Fergany, SalimJahan, T. Kanaan,A. Mahjoub, S. Morsy, N. Mosa'ad, M. A. Nassar,S. Ben Nefissa, H. Rashad, M. GawadRedha, F. Sarkis, M. Za'alouk, A. Zahlan and H. Zurayk.

[6]United Nations Development Programme. *2003 Arab Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society*, contributing authors: Laila Abdel Majid, Fowziyah Abdullah Abu-Khalid, Muhammad Hassan Al-Amin, Aziz Al-Azmeh, Sami Al-Banna, Tarek Al-Bishry, Hayder Ibrahim Ali, Nabil Ali, ,Sa'adallah Agha Al Kala'a, Muna Al-Khalidi, Mohamed Al-Mili, BaqerAlnajjar, Siham A. Al-Sawaigh, AmrNajeebArmanazi (New York: UN Publications, 2003) 43.

be established in the Arab Middle East, Cairo University once again raised Egypt's status of intellectual leadership. A number of recognizable names graduated from Cairo University including Boutrous Boutrous Ghali, Yasser Arafat, and Naguib Mahfouz. Cairo University was the site chosen by American President Barack Obama to deliver an address to the Arab world. It was thought that an address from Cairo generally, and Cairo University specifically, would have greater resonance amongst Muslims and, particularly, Arab Muslims.[7] Although Egyptian educational leadership had become stagnant, Cairo University has been a leading force in Egyptian higher education. Hence, the Obama administration chose it as a symbolic site to give a speech addressing Muslim and American relations. My research was conducted well before President Obama's speech; however, his administration's choice highlights my reasons for choosing Cairo University as a site for research addressing the effects of an authoritarian state on a university. Too, it appeared logical to seek understanding of how an authoritarian state might affect research and knowledge from a historical educational leader that had become stagnant.

A college rather than department is analogous to a Faculty at Cairo University. The Faculty of Economics and Political Science contains five departments: Political Science, Economics, Statistics, Public Management, and Computer Sciences and its application to social sciences. As the Faculty includes five departments, the number of professors and graduate students is far larger than my sixteen interviews would indicate.

[7]Michael Slackman, "An Ill-kept Secret" *New York Times.* May 27, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/world/middleeast/28cairo.html

Access

The overall relevance of Egypt and social sciences to the knowledge produced during the Islamic Golden Age was fortunate as I had better access to Egypt and Cairo University. The idea of pursuing interviews with junior academics was first given to me by Barbara Ibrahim, Director of the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement at the American University in Cairo. She asserted that Professor Ibrahim Karawan, at the University of Utah, could help me gain access to interview subjects and what could be easily accomplished in the research time and resources I had available. Too, fellow doctoral student, Mahmoud Hamad had links to the Faculty of Political Science and Economics. His help, in particular, proved invaluable.

Research in Egypt requires government–issued permits. This is particularly true for statistical research, which is regulated by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics or CAPMAS. Although one professor, who worked with the poor, claimed that she had never had a problem obtaining permits and permission for her research, many are not so fortunate. CAPMAS will often delay or deny permission for research into controversial topics. It is not uncommon for graduate students and independent researchers to bypass CAPMAS. Indeed, one reason for choosing a qualitatively-oriented, small-N study for this dissertation had to do with CAPMAS. The choice of method for this dissertation does not require CAPMAS approval. While the subject matter is not terribly controversial and some level of qualitative research was needed to begin the inquiry into how social capital might function with regard to intellectual elite and mass relations role in the development of a knowledge society, avoiding a research

design that would require CAPMAS approval was also a matter of consideration as it is a very time-consuming process that can easily end in failure.

Some Egyptian academics conduct their research with the same desire to avoid CAPMAS. While some view it as just another bureaucratic hurdle, others view the agency as one that the state uses to inhibit research on important issues. While CAPMAS was not directly involved in the case of Saad Eddin Ibrahim's arrest and imprisonment, it is thought that his research practices and areas of research are really at the bottom of his arrest. It is hardly likely that his arrest on the day he announced plans to monitor elections was a coincidence. Ibrahim also crossed redlines concerning religion by researching Coptic discrimination as well as discussing the Mubarak family. Red lines are unspoken "lines" that are politically or socially sensitive. There are no specific laws that prohibit what someone could say concerning Mubarak and his family or religion but these are sensitive categories that can bring state scrutiny.

It is also considered possible, by Ibrahim and other observers, that his research without a permit might have landed him in hot water. Ibrahim applied for permits but typically began his research without them as the permit process is a lengthy one. Ibrahim was arrested about three weeks after he completed research on trust in public institutions and published without a permit. While either or both reasons could have contributed to Ibrahim's arrest, the case serves to highlight a problem regarding knowledge production in Egypt. Research is often shallow and can be of very low reliability as the state places obstacles in the way of researchers. An arduous permit process limits the method of research and many choose shallower research designs in order to avoid lengthy bureaucratic processes. Smaller sample sizes allow researchers to avoid CAPMAS and

permits altogether and large studies are usually not duplicated due to the difficulties involved in conducting survey research in Egypt. Controversial research subjects are also to be avoided and that also limits knowledge production in a very serious way. Much of Ibrahim's research concerned civil society and democracy. He frequently violated or, at least, skirted red lines. For less well known and connected researchers, the lesson of his arrest and incarceration was likely that research had best be done within regime-allowed confines or no knowledge could be produced at all.[8]

State oversight also inhibits trust between researchers and the masses. Some of my interviewees wanted to know if the Egyptian state had approved my research. However my study was not large enough to require their oversight and so I had obtained permission from the Department Chair instead. This was quite good enough for all the professors I interviewed and it was also good enough for graduate students who had studied abroad but it produced discomfiture on the part of graduate students more unfamiliar with the research process. They were concerned that participation in my small-N study could compromise their futures. The families that I lived with were fearful of any state attention whatsoever. I would imagine that the participant observer research method works far better amongst the lower and middle classes than does anything that might require state approval. Academics who viewed the masses as too suspicious to work with were, likely, correct. Although it is probably true that many Egyptians do not understand the purpose of research, it is also true that they fear the attention of state security forces. A female professor I spoke with undoubtedly had worked out an incredible relationship of trust with the impoverished community she researched as she had found no problems either from the state or in gaining access to the neighborhood

[8] Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between the Redlines": 42-48

wherein she focused much of her research. However, the length of time needed to build that kind of trust between researcher and subjects is difficult to duplicate and she seems to find herself conducting new research but always on the same subjects. This shows that there is some problem with duplicating large studies cross-sectionally and that inhibits knowledge production.

Another advantage to the use of interviews utilizing a snowball method also relates to an authoritarian state. The culture of suspicion is not limited to the masses but can also be found within the university. While my questions were not designed to solicit particularly sensitive information, they also did not avoid it. Some few of my questions concerning local organizations that professors might be involved with were refused answer and my strongest and most complete interviews came from people whom Mahmoud Hamad personally introduced me to as he vouched for my intentions and credentials as a fellow Ph.D. candidate who was conducting fieldwork to complete a dissertation. Living with families in middle class neighborhoods further validated the culture of suspicion that inhibits research as families I lived with spoke in whispers about political preferences or worried that neighbors might think me a Central Intelligence Agent (CIA) of the U.S. Government.

None of this is particularly uncommon in the Arab Middle East and the tense international situation between the U.S. and Arab countries further contributes to suspicion of American motives.[9] While Egypt is a longtime U.S. ally, the perceived support of the American leadership for the Mubarak regime creates an immediate suspicion and, sometimes, antagonism. Five of the six assistant professors I interviewed

[9] Janine Clark, "Field Research Methods in the Middle East": *PS: Political Science &Politics,* 39 (July, 2006): 418.

had completed their PhD.s in the U.S. and this, along with a personal introduction, alleviated personal suspicions and doubts. However, several of them pointed out that the suspicion I dealt with had similarly hampered their research in a post- 9/11 United States.

The question of conducting field research as a Western female in the Muslim Middle East always comes up and must be addressed. It is far less of an issue than many suppose.[10] My gender did not matter nearly so much as my citizenship for most of my interview subjects. My American citizenship was commented upon while my gender never was. It is possible that my few female interview subjects were more forthcoming on certain issues with a woman than they would have been with a man and more likely to discuss the impact of their own gender on their careers than they would have been with a male researcher. However, this is unclear and the suspicion of me as an American from the high number of female graduate students outweighed any gains. Only four out of my sixteen interviews were with women although women vastly outnumber male graduate students. Despite that, the gender disparity is reversed amongst professors and far more men pursue a Ph.D. and return to a career in Egypt.

My gender and religion had more impact within the homes I lived in. As a Western female convert to Islam I both gained opportunities while losing others. Despite occasional worries that I might really be CIA both the shared personal connections and shared religion had the effect of producing far more trust from families as well as more inclusion in family activities. My families liked showing me off to their friends and other family members. I partook of their celebration for *Eidul-Fitr* and absorbed far more of the culture and family life than one would suspect with such short sojourns in Cairo.

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[10] See Jillian Schwedler, "The Third Gender: Western Female Researchers in the Middle East." *PS: Politics and Political Science* 39(July, 2006): 425-428 for a broader and more thorough discussion of the impact of gender on field research in the Middle East.

However, I was expected to adhere to Islamic norms for women. This did not include veiling but did include where I went and with whom. I was unable to attend events professors at Cairo University invited me to unless a female friend could accompany me and they feared to be out at night. Indeed, I was once locked into an apartment with the granddaughter of the house. While this was aimed far more at constraining the granddaughter than me, nobody seemed to think that this might create a problem for me. As an unmarried woman, I was considered a girl and a foreign one who needed to be protected. Protection generally involves constraints on movements. I was expected to give account of my movements and when I would return home. Deviation did not produce anger or any kind of sanction but this immense worry and fear that something had happened to me while they were responsible for me. While I could have done as I chose, I am sure, alienating those you live with is never a good idea.

This is an area of negotiating what I perceive to be their cultural norms and they perceive as religious. This norm affects me as a female Muslim rather than as a Western female and trust is gained at the expense of freedom. Within this context, it may surprise many that my lack of a veil was never an issue except insofar as moving about on my own became more of a problem as my families were convinced that I would be unsafe unless accompanied by another woman. However, I was always considered a new Muslim that family members were anxious to instruct in Islam. Veiling carried the instruction that a woman was perceived far more poorly if she started wearing one and then stopped than if she did not wear one at all so they approved of my caution. Further while religiosity and female veiling has grown in Egypt over the past twenty years, it is not like the conservative Gulf states that would, likely, question a lack of a veil far more.

Nonetheless to veil or not to veil caused me a level of anxiety that a non-Muslim Western female researcher need not have in Egypt. I feared that once I put it on, I would have a harder time justifying not wearing it in the U.S. and this need not be of concern to non-Muslim women. The decision probably did impact my ability to move around more freely though as at least some women in Egypt choose to veil in order to negotiate access to public space more freely.[11]

## Interview Methods

The primary method of data collection consisted of semistructured, qualitative interviews with faculty in the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at the University of Cairo. I chose this particular faculty for two reasons. The first reason was entirely practical. The Faculty of Political Science and Economics was the one most accessible to me. The second reason derives from the 2003 Arab Human Development Report. The Report notes of the scholarly renaissance that marked the Abbasid Empire that "The third factor contributing to the scientific renaissance was that was preceded by a renaissance in the humanities and the social sciences."[12]

Initial selection of faculty was largely based on their specific positions (i.e., senior faculty, junior faculty, lecturers as well as teaching and research assistants). Initial contacts were facilitated by Dr. Ibrahim Karawan, and a fellow doctoral candidate, Mahmoud Hamad, with ties and contacts to Cairo University; I used a snowball technique to gain further interviews. The snowball method relies on interviewees to give a name or other contact information of another person to be interviewed. While this technique did

[11] See Arlene MacLeod. *Accommodating Protest: Working Women, The New Veiling, and Change in Cairo*, (New York:Columbia University Press, 1993) for an examination of how veiling is used to negotiate more freedom and access to public space by women in Cairo.
[12] *2003 Arab Human Development Report*, 43.

not facilitate access across positions, it did prove helpful to gain more interviews across a position type. The emphasis on within group referrals as well as an inopportune martial arts demonstration by student members of the Muslim Brotherhood at *Al Azhar* University led to a few interviews at the American University of Cairo (AUC)—a far more elite institution than Cairo University.

I spent four weeks in Cairo in December and January of 2005-2006 gathering preliminary data and December and January of 2006-2007 conducting interviews. Altogether I spent approximately nine weeks in Cairo across two years. I obtained sixteen interviews. I was able to interview five graduate students, six assistant professors, one associate professor and four full professors as displayed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Interview Table

| Department | Graduate Students | Assistant Professors | Associate Professors | Full Professors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political Science | 5 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Economics | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Statistics | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Public Administration | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Computing for Social Sciences | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

These numbers are skewed and reflect the necessity of an introduction from a person known to the interview subject. Professor Karawan's name opened doors with full professors while Mahmoud Hamad's in-person introduction of me to graduate students and assistant professors facilitated those interviews. Assistant professors and graduate students were most generous with their time and granted me two-hour interviews. Full professors were only able to grant me an hour and the associate professor was kind enough to email me his answers.

Field research granted me the opportunity to better understand what it is like to conduct research within Egypt. Much of what my interview subjects had to say both enhanced my own experience and I gained greater insights through living within Egypt than I would have if I had simply emailed questionnaires. In particular, the intersection of gender and religion was highly informative. Although it hampered my access as my families wanted me to be safe, it did generate rather more information as to what it might mean to be a female researcher and academic in Egypt. It is not nearly as difficult as many Americans might believe but obstacles do exist due to concerns about safety and cultural expectations regarding marriage. I was able to generate a lot of information out of a relatively small sample size and owe the families I lived with for even more insights gained as a participant-observer.[13]

[13]Participant-observer was not a planned part of my methodology, just of my living arrangements. However, it did contribute strongly to insights I was able to form concerning the constraints of an authoritarian state and how that differs from cultural constraints. With enough knowledge, cultural constraints are more easily escaped. Unfortunately I did not spend enough time in Egypt to gain enough cultural insights to negotiate more freedom of movement.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Interviews

My interviews were conducted face to face and I took notes. I had been informed before I began my research that tape recording would promote distrust and limit my information so I took notes by hand. This in and of itself promoted my understanding of how a climate of repression limits research as it showed anxiety on the part of my interview subjects that their words could be used against them. While full professors were much less anxious concerning the use of their names, graduate students were very fearful.

Use of positional "snowballing" or using a chain of referrals did increase the depth of interviews—particularly with graduate students. As I was interviewing within a Faculty, one interview subject would generally directly introduce me to another and then we could exchange phone calls and emails to schedule an interview time. It also seemed that when one person considered me trustworthy, another who considered my introductory person trustworthy would be more likely to answer an email or return a phone call after verifying my identity. Name-dropping worked quite well but the initial points of contact were needed to vouch for my identity. I sometimes waited days for those emails or phone calls to be exchanged to vouch for my identity. Again, the more trust someone had in the referral person, the more information they gave me in

interviews. The method of "snowballing" is useful in the Middle East and used by many.[14]

However, the snowballing method and qualitative interviews also contain certain disadvantages. My sample is heavily skewed towards those initial positions wherein I was given an introduction by a person already trusted. My sample contains only one associate professor and while time was certainly a factor for all my interview subjects, the issue of trust was also a factor. Too, the sample size is too small to be considered very representative. The use of qualitative interviewing techniques that are semistructured and reliance on open-ended questions is designed to allow interview subjects to volunteer information that the researcher might not have thought about and that worked. However, while my interview subjects freely talked about other Faculties at the University as well as other universities, I did not gain any kind of access to faculty and graduate students at other Faculties. Between my time limitations and constraints on my freedom of movement by families that I lived with, I also failed to access a good sample *across* departments within the Faculty that I studied. If I had had the opportunity to stay longer and develop those networks and better learn to negotiate my freedom of movement without a female companion, my sample size would have been much more representative and the information generated could have been much greater. As it was, I gained a great deal of information as once some trust was engendered, many really wanted to discuss issues concerning how they conducted their own search for the acquisition, dissemination, and production of knowledge.

For my study this means that generalizations across other disciplines cannot be made with any degree of confidence. Further the assertion made by *The2003 Arab Human*

[14] Clark, "Field Research in the Middle East": 419

*Development Report* that a renaissance in the humanities and social sciences may portend a renaissance in the hard sciences cannot be empirically validated through my study. The idea that a spirit of creativity and free and independent inquiry are necessary to developing new technologies and gaining new insights into the physical world would appear to be both logically and intuitively accurate. Although the claim is logical my research cannot demonstrate the veracity of the claim. This is disappointing and while I would argue that my research does show that a culture of repression fails to facilitate any open exchange of ideas, the small sample size and reliance on subject-generated ideas to lead me down unexpected paths limits and constrains the validity of my research to some questions. Further, interviews with student activists would also have generated a much stronger understanding of how repression depoliticizes the university. None of my interview subjects were willing to admit to any activism and, indeed, a known record of activism can spell the end of a career as a graduate student or new professor. Full professors face fewer problems and are less fearful but many of their ties are with international institutions and think tanks. Student activists among undergraduates would, doubtless, have had a great deal to say concerning repression but my method was not conducive to gaining introduction to undergraduates.

## Conclusion

The focus of my research concerned how the Faculty of Economics and Political Science carried out their work within the confines of an authoritarian state that had placed certain controls designed to depoliticize what had once been an important site of political activism—Cairo University. My method owes something to the participant-observation

style of 'soaking and poking'[15] and elicited information and understanding of the lived experience of my interview subjects but offers less in the way of determining causal relationships and generalizability. Nonetheless, this type of study can generate insights despite its limitations.

In the following chapter, I will detail the concepts that are needed to understand how professors and graduate students negotiate conducting research and imparting learning to undergraduate within an authoritarian state. In order to understand the context and how it functions to depoliticize those pursuing an academic career, we need to explore structural theories that seek to explain the persistence of the authoritarian state in the Arab Middle East. *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report*'s conceptualization of the knowledge society and the obstacles faced in creating such a knowledge society gives insight into the environment within which academics must negotiate their task of carrying out the university mission that is likened to the knowledge society as explained by *The2003 Report*. The social capital concept can, in one dimension, further our understanding of the control exerted by an authoritarian state. In another dimension, it helps us understand how academics negotiate their environment and escape authoritarian controls.

In order to better understand the context of Egyptian education and the depoliticization of Cairo University, we need to know something of the history of modern education in Egypt. I will undertake this examination of history in Chapter 3 as previously stated. In subsequent chapters, I will discuss the information found through my interviews at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. Chapter 7 will examine the recent Egyptian revolution and attempt to uncover why and how the university was

[15] Richard F. Fenno. *Homestyle: House Members in Their Districts* book review in "The Political Science Ressource Blog" Joseph M. Ellis. http://polisciprof.blogspot.com/2006/03/book-review-richard-fennos-home-style.html

irrelevant while other links, sometimes facilitated by social media, were instrumental to the ouster of President Husni Mubarak.

# CHAPTER 2

# THE STATE, KNOWLEDGE, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

## Introduction

My methodology relied on a case study approach that emphasizes interpretation and privileges human generated meanings rather than determining directions of causality. In the pages that follow I will discuss the theoretical concepts that help uncover that meaning and contextualize the lived reality of my informants.

Accordingly, this chapter broadly discusses structural theories pertaining to the Middle East and, in particular, why democratic transitions have failed to occur in the Arab Middle East. Discussion of structural theories and persistent authoritarianism contextualizes the experience of professors and students at Cairo University and provides the concepts that explain why a transition was initiated in 2011. Persistent authoritarianism and the tools of the ruling regime's power maintenance strategies clarify why and how a knowledge deficit exists as outlined by the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*. While I will discuss cultural obstacles to further the contextualization of the environment in which Cairo University finds itself, the political obstacles outlined by the Report reinforce the findings of structural approaches to persistent authoritarianism and political and economic failures of Arab states.

Finally, I discuss social capital as it pertains to the impact of an authoritarian state upon the university. Ayubi's[16] contention that Arab regimes exercise power through politicizing bureaucratic appointments, found within structural approaches to the study of the Middle East, is reinforced by the contributions of Feddarke et al.[17] on rationalization and transparency. Together these help us decipher the puzzle of patronage politics within fairly well-institutionalized or rationalized bureaucratic structures. Political appointments to key positions and strategic threats of the uses of security forces create disruptions that produce insecurity and distrust. It is bridging social capital, as discussed in the work of Robert Putnam[18] that allows escape from the pressures of political appointees and state security apparatus in order to create change.

## Structural Approaches

Reaction to the essentialism of some cultural approaches prompted structural approaches that emphasize political economy, colonialism, and institutions. These approaches rely on concepts derived from the Western historical experience but stress malformation as a product of colonialism, external interference, and authoritarian regimes. Culture and religion are subordinated to such structural factors as colonialism, external interference, and persistent authoritarianism.

Studies grounded in structural approaches emphasize the nature of Middle Eastern incorporation into the international economy and modern state system. Structurally based studies do not deny the significance of culture and religion but stress the relevance of

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[16] See Nazih Ayubi. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (I.B. Tauris: 1996).
[17] Johannes Feddarke, et al. "Economic Growth and Social Capital: A Critical Reflection," *Theory and Society*. 28 (Oct., 1999): 709-745.
[18] See Robert D. Putnam. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000)

universal theoretical frameworks to the study of the Middle East.[19] That is, concepts such as civil society, social capital, and the knowledge economy and society can be successfully utilized to study the Middle East although unique histories and cultural specificities impact the substance within universal theoretical models, derived as they are from a uniquely European experience. For example, Putnam's study of social capital defines it as "norms, networks, and values."[20] Norms, networks, and values obviously exist in the Middle East but the content differs from European and Anglo-American content. Differences in content are attributable to various causes but culture and religion are not perceived as deterministic as in the orientalist and occidentalist approaches.[21] The structural position of Middle Eastern states and societies as they were incorporated into the international order plays the most pivotal role in determining the current content of norms, networks, and values.

One stream of structural literature concerning the persistence of authoritarian rule in the Middle East focuses on how any freedom enjoyed by civil society has been conferred upon civil society organizations by the state and not as a result of domestic pressure. States in the region have, in the main, tried to mobilize the masses to support the state and legitimize regimes. Augustus Richard Norton observes that regime emphasis on creating mass solidarity has, paradoxically, had the opposite effect. People, seeking refuge from a coercive state, rely on socially familiar and, yet often divisive, associations

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[19]Maha Abdelrarhaman, *Civil Society Exposed: The Politics of NGOs in Egypt*(New York: Tauris Academic, 2004), 80-81

[20] Robert Putnam. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[21] These two approaches rely on timeless essentials of Arab and Muslim culture. They are flipsides of one another with Orientalism as a Western approach that examines the Middle East as essentially unchanging. At its extreme it perceives the Arab Middle East as monolithic. This approach was examined and critiqued by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*. Occidentalism derives from the Arab Middle East and generally agrees with Orientalist ideas concerning Islamic exceptionalism but argues that this is not only positive but that Islamic cultures are essentially superior to the West.

as family, clan, tribe, and sect. These familiar associations are also the only secure place from which to launch even modest political and economic demands and aspirations.[22] Raymond Hinnebush affirms Norton's observations:

> Authoritarian-populist regimes also develop structures highly resistant to pluralization. While they exercise their power through military and bureaucracy, they lack a stable social base in a dominant social class (aristocracy or bourgeoisie) and therefore substitute the use of primordial (kinship, ethnic, regional) 'asabiyyah and patronage to assure elite solidarity and the deployment of Leninist party organization and corporatist association to incorporate a popular constituency.[23]

Nazih Ayubi echoes the finding that Arab regimes exercise power through bureaucratic means. Rulers use bureaucracy to exert control through shifting people around and increasing unpredictability—contrary to Weber's notions of bureaucratic utility through predictability and routinization. Arbitrary shifts of administrative authority increase perceptions that all power emanates from the ruler and power and position is dependent on his whims. Ruler methods of control over bureaucracy create a very power-conscious system that inculcates competition for access to the ruler and jealousy regarding any perceived encroachment upon administrative tasks and responsibilities. A power conscious bureaucracy is less interested in meeting a goal than in defining a pecking order and hierarchy. Competition for position or ruler patronage ensures that bureaucratic administrators will act as a check on other administrators and concern themselves more with their own power over their personnel.[24]

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[22] Augustus Richard Norton, "Introduction" in *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Ed. Augustus Richard Nortan (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995): 6-7
[23]Raymond Hinnebush, "State, Civil Society, and Political Change." Ibid. 239
[24]Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State*, 321.

## Persistent Authoritarianism

More recent literature examines the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East. The authoritarian regimes of the Middle East endure even while formerly authoritarian states elsewhere have given way to democracy.[25]Middle Eastern regimes appeared able to manage political liberalization in the 1990s to maintain their rule, Similarly, despite the apparent reforms and political openings in the wake of the American invasion of Iraq, Middle Eastern regimes proved tenacious at hanging onto power. Political reforms have stalled and, in many cases, reversed. No authoritarian leader has been removed via the ballot box and of the Arab states only Lebanon has seen contested elections with some circulation of elites.

Eva Bellin explores the failure of MENA (Middle East North Africa) to initiate any kind of democratic transition. Arguing that the prerequisites to democratization better explains failure to consolidate democracy than do explanations involving the presence or absence of civil society, a middle class, and other factors often considered necessary but insufficient to democratization,[26] she relies on Skocpol's well-known argument that revolution depends upon state capacity to maintain control over the means of coercion to better explain the marked resistance of Middle Eastern regimes to democratic transition.[27] Focusing on the robustness of the coercive apparatus, Bellin delineates four factors that help explore the relative robustness of the state coercive apparatus. These factors include fiscal health, international support networks, the will and capacity of the coercive

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[25] Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist, "Acknowledgements" in *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance.*Eds. Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist.(Boulder, CO; Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2005), ix.

[26]Bellin asserts that these factors may better account for consolidation or failures to consolidate a democracy than they account for failures to initiate transitions to democracy.

[27]Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective,"*Comparative Politics* 36(Jan., 2004): 139-157.

apparatus to repress, and popular mobilization. Although Egypt has a relatively well institutionalized security apparatus and its fiscal health is always questionable, it fares poorly on Bellin's other indicators of democratic transition. Despite poor fiscal health, the Egyptian regime is able to maintain itself through international support networks.

Bellin's explanation of Middle Eastern failures to initiate democratic transitions as indicative of a robust authoritarianism rather than as symptomatic of the "absences" of Middle Eastern societies, escapes the essentialist trap while gaining explanatory leverage over Middle Eastern exceptionalism. Bellin, like Salame,[28] notes that there is an exceptionalism at work in the Middle East but it does not lie in the presence of Islam or any of the other explanations usually advanced for absent democratization in the region such as state-driven economies, impoverished and illiterate populations, absent or weak civil societies or geographical remoteness from centers of democracy.[29] Instead the absence of democratic transitions in the region is better explained through the robustness of factors promoting the continuing existence of authoritarian regimes.[30] Bellin's approach allows the investigation of what is present rather than what is absent and, thus, gains better analytical purchase over Middle Eastern exceptionalism. While the approach of prerequisites to democratization may hinder democratic transitions, they do not usually address persistent authoritarianism and failures to initiate democratic transitions in the first place. Examining the factors of robust authoritarianism allows for the examination of the state and society and will also allow us to address the Arab Spring of 2011 in

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[28]Ghassan Salame notes that while Arab/Islamic exceptionalism appears to exist, the apparent continuity and stagnation highlighted in many orientalist approaches obscures a great deal of change. Ghassan Salame, "Introduction: Where are the Democrats," in *Democracy without Democrats*, ed. Ghassan Salame, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 2.

[29]Bellin argues that all of these factors might explain failures to democratize but do not explain failures to initiate democratic transitions.

[30] Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East": 139-157

Chapter 7. Factors accounting for the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East reinforce the salience of political obstacles that the *2003 Arab Human Development Report* outlines as detrimental to the formation of a knowledge society.[31]

In the following, I will apply Bellin's explanatory factors of robust authoritarianism to Egypt. Bellin's robust authoritarianism changes our explanatory focus away from bottom-up factors and towards statist or top-down factors on societal formations. While the explanatory shift might seem at odds with the rest of this dissertation, it allows us to more clearly delineate the state's role on the societal formations indicated by social capital. This dissertation's emphasis on the state as the most important explanatory variable on social capital formation and salience to the knowledge deficit necessitates a greater articulation of the state. Further, factors relating to robust authoritarianism as outlined by Bellin promote our understanding of the environment in which Egyptian academics live and work.

International Support Networks and Egypt

Henry and Springborg hypothesize in *Globalization and the Politics of Development the Middle East* that the primary obstacles to economic development in the MENA (Middle East North Africa) region are political and result from regime power maintenance strategies. They explore state capacity in terms of extractive capability, accountability, and transparency.

According to Henry and Springborg, strategic rents allow many states to escape the structural reforms required by globalization. Strategic rents include foreign aid and remittances. Structural reforms would improve state capacity but would likely be the

[31] These obstacles will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter within the section on the knowledge society.

downfall of unpopular regimes. The ability of many Middle Eastern states to garner strategic rents is a major obstacle in the reform process. Egypt is one of the region's biggest recipients of remittances and strategic rents in the form of foreign aid. As of 2004, the United States had delivered 50 billion USD of aid to Egypt since 1975.[32] Remittances have been estimated to be as important to Egyptian foreign reserves as tourism. Too, in return for its participation in the 1991 Gulf War, Egypt garnered massive debt relief but came under IMF conditionality.[33]Macroindicators improved through the 1990s but failed to trickle down to popular sectors.

Egypt has proven particularly adept at avoiding reform or using it to further fragment society and prolong the rule of current elites. Indeed, the ability of Egypt to both garner support from international networks in the form of aid and remittances may well be one factor in the failure of Egypt to initiate a democratic transition. Although financially impacted by the global economy, the Middle East in general and Egypt in particular have managed to avoid political reform even as economic reform has taken place. The relatively greater latitude of the Egyptian state in forestalling political reform can, in part, be attributed to the economic cushioning provided by strategic rents and remittances.

Henry and Springborg's findings are in keeping with Bellin's. Although the poor fiscal health of the Egyptian regime would seem to indicate incipient failure of the state's coercive apparatus, rents allow the Egyptian state to maintain and even increase funding for the state security apparatus even while adhering to IMF directives to cut food subsidies as well as following their own regime maintenance logic with regard to privatization. Too, the regime has cut social welfare spending and education spending

[32]Charles Levinson, "$50 billion later, taking stock of US aid to Egypt," *Christian Science Monitor*. April 12, 2004.
[33]http://www.123independenceday.com/egypt/economy.html

but still manages to fully fund its coercive apparatus. More dramatic failures in the global economy as well as in the economy of Egypt's American patron would be needed to undermine the international support networks of the Egyptian state.

Fiscal Health in Egypt

Eberhard Kienle uses the case study of Egypt to contest the neoliberal notion that economic liberalization will lead to political liberalization and democratization.[34]Kienle asserts that

> This structural adjustment of liberties tended to restrict the liberties of economic losers and extend those of winners, added political excorporation to economic loss and recompensed economic success with a degree of political incorporation. It sought to deprive the losers of the means by which they might have resisted and to associate, within limits, with winners in order to create what some have called an 'alliance for reform.[35]

Reforms undercut state patronage as directed towards the people and mass welfare and political competitors, primarily Islamists, rushed to fill the vacuum. Patronage was turned from distribution of resources by the state to crony capitalism as the proliferating accusations of corruption during the 1990s demonstrate.[36]

Despite Egypt's relative insulation from reform, the economy weakened so badly that structural reforms were undertaken by the Egyptian government in accordance with IMF demands. Nonetheless, Egypt manages to delay reform and turn reform towards regime maintenance strategies. As the regime can no longer effectively gain acquiescence to its rule, it has initiated political deliberalization. Political deliberalization denies economic

[34]Eberhard Kienle, *A Grand Delusion; Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 167-193.
[35]Ibid. 145.
[36]Ibid. 144.

losers the means to resist and allows the regime to bring about new state-based patronage networks that maintain the ruling regime. Henry and Springborg write

> The civilian political system, in short, atrophied in the decade of the 1990's, providing a steadily smaller counterbalance to the military and security-based core of the regime. It is the need to serve that base, both directly by facilitating the growth of the military economy, and indirectly through the encouragement of crony capitalism, that accounts in large measure for the failure of structural adjustment to be rapid or thorough…. [37]

As Bellin notes the military and security-based core maintains funding and support while the civilian system (which may be well-institutionalized) is underfunded and purposely fragmented.

John Sfakinakis asserts that the reform process of the 1990s offers insight into pre-reform networks and the role played by policy reform in network creation. He argues that a lack of transparency and accountability suited the state and networks of elite businessmen. The state's power maintenance agenda demanded allocation of patronage to a narrow base of supporters. Elite businessmen wished to consolidate their monopoly of power over the marketplace. Business and bureaucrat networks without accountability or transparency mechanisms managed to turn the privatization process into a means of rent distributions and political patronage.

In terms of Bellin's robust authoritarianism, the crony capitalism and favoritism that reached unprecedented heights under Mubarak's rule[38] may have funded the sectors of the security apparatus but was problematic for the fiscal health of the nation. Society did

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[37]Clement M. Henry and Robert Springborg. *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 147.

[38] John Sfakianakis, "Five Ways to Bring Investment Back to Egypt" *The Bloomberg Report*. Feb. 21, 2011. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-21/five-ways-to-bring-investors-back-to-egypt-commentary-by-john-sfakianakis.html

not see any benefits. Thus, crony capitalism may well have contributed to the recent Egyptian revolution. I will discuss that possibility at greater length in Chapter 7.

Capacity and Will of the Coercive Apparatus

According to Bellin, will and capacity should not be collapsed into a single category. A state's coercive apparatus can have the capacity to crush a democratic movement but not the will or it can have the will but lack capacity. Capacity is associated with institutionalization. Bellin argues that institutionalization appeals to Weberian bureaucratization. That is, how concerned is the security apparatus with rule-governed or proceduralized practices that are predictable and governed by merit? In much of the Middle East, the distinction between the ruling regime and the security apparatus is difficult to discern as they are closely allied.[39] Although Egypt's military is relatively well-institutionalized,[40] the security apparatus includes security forces other than the military whose affiliations are much more shadowy.

Four main branches are included in Egypt's security apparatus. These branches include the military, the police, the Central Security Force and the General Intelligence Service.[41] The military, drawn from a cross-section of Egyptian society through conscription, is highly respected. It is the police and Central Security Force, under the control of the Ministry of the Interior that is most hated by Egyptians and has been the primary target of Egyptian anger in the 2011 Revolution.[42] The distinction drawn between the military and the police and Central Security is crucial to the relative success

[3939]Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism": 143-145.
[40]Ibid., 149.
[41]Said, Mohamed Kadry, and Noha Bakr. "Egypt Security Sector Reforms," *Arab Reform Initiative Thematic Studies* (February 2011): 3. http://arab-reform.net/IMG/pdf/Thematic_Studies_Egypt_Security_Sector_Reforms-_Eng-.pdf
[42] The Revolution will be addressed more thoroughly in Chapter 5.

of the revolution according to Bellin's understanding of a robust authoritarianism. While this will be addressed at much greater length in Chapter 5, institutionalization of the security apparatus in Egypt allowed both the Egyptian people and the security apparatus to draw distinctions among security branches and the ruling regime. While capacity was certainly present, will amongst some branches in the security apparatus was likely missing. The institutional distinction between the military and the police and Central Security Force was important not only to the Egyptian people but also for institutional calculation as to how to respond to reform demands.

Despite a relatively well institutionalized security apparatus, Egyptian coercive ability remains high. The puzzle of relatively high institutionalization coupled with patronage is replicated elsewhere in Egypt. Ayubi's contention that the need to secure ruler patronage for position security ensures that bureaucratic administrators will remain loyal to the ruler out of self-interest may also provide explanatory power for this puzzle.
Within the university, political appointment of university rectors and deans appears to also serve the purpose of maintaining regime power through patronage or as Ayubi contends, through the reliance of key individuals on the ruler's power and position to maintain their own. Too, the presence of security forces on campus maintains the visibility and threat of the regime's coercive power at the university.

Popular Mobilization

In Salwa Ismail's work *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters*, the problems engendered by neoliberal reform and an oppressive state apparatus are confronted by popular sectors of society. For the residents of popular quarters such as *Bulaq* the state as a coercive and oppressive force is everywhere but in terms of public services the state is

nowhere. At one time *Bulaq* was one of the sites of militant Islamic activism but this was contained by the state in the early 1990s. Ismail contends that a fundamental shift occurred with neoliberalism wherein the distributive state became the security state. Ordinary citizens of the popular quarters are disengaged from the state as the state becomes a more brutal and repressive but nonresponsive state. People are more involved in the informal economy and informal networks.[43]

The militant Islamic nature of Egypt's popular mobilization indicates the relative importance that can be played by real or perceived threat in garnering support from international networks for regime maintenance. Indeed, the Islamist nature of opposition movements may well have depressed middle-class demands for democratic reforms and certainly contributed towards a lack of international support. The Mubarak regime has long used the threat of the take-over of the Muslim Brotherhood to counter international demands for reform from key supporters, the United States and Europeans.

These factors have made the costs of repression relatively low in Egypt. However, the 2005 *Kifaya* (Enough) Movement ushered in a change in popular mobilization and networking capability through social media. The trajectory of popular mobilization and alliance behavior amongst opposition groups has only increased over time. Hence, by 2011, cost calculations of repression dramatically changed in Egypt. The change in the costs of repression that occurred in society did not take place at the university. The cost of political activism remained high at Cairo University for students and professors alike.

[43]Salwa Ismail. *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters*(University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

## The Arab Human Development Report and Obstacles to Knowledge

The *2003 Arab Human Development Report* examines one of the three obstacles to economic development in Arab states—the failure to develop a knowledge society or the existence of a knowledge deficit in the Arab states. Substantial political and social obstacles exist in Arab societies to the acquisition, dissemination, and production of knowledge.[44]

The authors of the Report chose the metaphorical concept of knowledge society over the far more instrumental concept of the knowledge economy. The authors appeared to have wanted a concept that would emphasize how freely made linkages promoted knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production. They operationalize knowledge society through precisely these variables—acquisition, dissemination, and production. Hence, the use of knowledge society as a term within this dissertation as well as the exploration of the utility of the social capital concept in order to better ascertain how linkages and, in particular, links among persons or networks might promote or hobble knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production and, specifically, how that impacts Egyptian academics at Cairo University as seen through the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. In order to better understand what is meant by knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production, a discussion of obstacles from the *2003 Report* is necessary.

Political and cultural obstacles stand in the way of knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production. While my research question focuses far more on the political obstacles than cultural ones, I do examine cultural obstacles at some length,

[44] *2003 Arab Human Development Report.*

here, in order to contextualize and give a fuller picture of the sources of the Arab knowledge deficit. Further, as my methodology relies on an interpretive case study, cultural issues do sometimes explain problems encountered by my interview subjects at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. Hence, the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*'s exploration of the political and cultural obstacles to knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production provides a necessary context to explore how members of the Faculty function within an authoritarian regime.

Finally, throughout my interviews I encountered information that validated the *2003 Report*'s emphasis on political obstacles as the most important set of problems that academics encountered in carrying out the mission of universities—to acquire, disseminate, and produce knowledge. Cultural obstacles, although certainly present in the information given to me, appeared to be more negotiable. Nonetheless, I detail cultural obstacles here to provide better context for following chapters concerning the history of education in Egypt and information gathered in interviews.

Political Obstacles

Obstacles to knowledge diffusion include the well-known problems facing the mass media in Arab countries. Most Arab regimes are not strong proponents of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Egyptian journalists are routinely harassed, fined, and imprisoned under the 2006 Press Law that basically forbids the criticism of public officials. An oft-cited example of the application of this law is the case of *Al-Dustour* editor, Ibrahim Eissa and journalist, Saher Zaki. Eissa and Zaki were each sentenced to a year in prison for publishing a story that concerned the Mubarak family. The paper had reported on an ordinary citizen's complaint that President Mubarak had misused up to LE

500 billion in funds accrued by privatization of several companies.[45] Although information technologies have allowed some to sidestep regime repression, it has also given the Mubarak regime new crimes to consider and new people to arrest and or prosecute. Two well-known Egyptian cases include blogger Karim Amer, who was sentenced to three years in 2007 for sedition and insult to Islam on his blog. More than one protest has been organized via the social networking site, Facebook. The Mubarak regime has reacted with arrests of organizers and the use of torture in an attempt to extract names and passwords of participants.[46]

Obstacles to knowledge production and application include a lack of state and private investment into R & D and the reliance on importation of technology as a means to acquire technical knowledge.[47] The authoritarian states prevalent in the Arab World place constraints on institutions that render the creativity and free spirit of inquiry necessary to knowledge production politically risky. The above examples that show constraints upon dissemination of knowledge are equally applicable to researchers. These political constraints not only stifle individual creativity but also lessen the linkages necessary to exchange knowledge. In other words, what might be termed social capital[48] that creates or relies on links amongst actors and groups becomes suspect and loses efficacy in an authoritarian environment. The networking aspect of social capital is heavily scrutinized by the state as a potential site of opposition and, thus threat to regime power.

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[45]Mohamed El-Sayed, "For Speaking Out," *Al-Ahram Weekly*.29 June - 5 July 2006 Issue No. 801.
[46] Ellen Knickmeyer, "Fledgling Rebellion on Facebook Is Struck Down by Force in Egypt," *Washington Post*. Sunday, May 18, 2008; Page A01
[47] 2003 Arab Human Development Report: pp. 4-5, 81-83
[48] Social capital will be further examined and explained in this chapter.

Cultural Obstacles

The *2003 Arab Human Development Report* notes several cultural obstacles as well as recounts antidotes within the religion and culture of the region. As is often the case with sociocultural and socioreligious factors, the contradictions inherent in these factors mean that the solutions to obstacles are also a part of the Arab religious and cultural heritage.

This is where the Arab Human Development Reports sharply differs with popular imagination and, sometimes, scholarship in the West. Europeans and Americans sometimes identify religion and culture as the source of Arab problems while the *Report* understands culture and religion as holding contradictory values. Precisely how and what values inimical to knowledge development are currently dominant is a question that needs to be examined. The indictment of an entire culture and religion risks getting rid of values that are positively inclined to knowledge acquisition along with those that are less so.

Islam, the religion of the majority of Arabs, encourages its adherents to seek after knowledge. The marked tendency of Arab-Islamic civilization and empires, historically, has been to encourage knowledge and the pursuit of learning. Currently, however, an emphasis has been placed upon an interpretation of Islam that encourages quiescence and undermines free inquiry. The authors of the Report note that these interpretations promote authoritarian rule as they discourage free thinking, free speech, and free inquiry. Simplistic and repressive interpretations have also been picked by some of the region's Islamic movements who may rely on superficial understandings in order to mobilize followers to violence against oppressive regimes that allow little or no resort to change through peaceful political challenges. Clearly, however, the religion that once produced

the Golden Age and such thinkers as IbnRushd,[49] al Khwarizimi,[50]Ibn al Haythm,[51] and many others also contains a part of the solution to current obscurantism. According to the authors of the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*, the prevailing interpretation and understanding of Islam must shift to one that emphasizes inquiry.

The role played by the Arabic language is also considered by the *Report*'s authors. While Arabic is a very rich language, current failures to translate and produce new knowledge are implicated in two serious problems that are associated with knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production failures. First the *Report* discusses the problem of Arabization in universities. Failures to translate enough knowledge into Arabic present serious obstacles to knowledge acquisition for many university students. Indeed, in the homes where I lived young people attending Cairo University often struggled over assigned reading for their classes that was written in English. None of them were really proficient in English and it seemed to present yet another obstacle to understanding and internalizing the knowledge they were supposed to be acquiring in their university studies.

The second major problem noted by the authors of the Report had to do with the method and curricula for learning Arabic. Arabic diglossia presents learning and teaching challenges. Classical Arabic is far more formal than the spoken Arabic, which is used for everyday communication. Classical Arabic is used in almost an elitist fashion

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[49]IbnRushd, known as Averros in the West, was best known for arguing that there was no incompatibility between religion and philosophy. His commentaries on Aristotle contributed to the rediscovery of Aristotle by Europeans. http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ir/index.html

[50] Al-Khwarizimi is noted for his contribution to mathematics, particularly algebra where his text, *Hisab al-jabrw'al-muqabala*, is considered a foundational contribution to algebra and, indeed, where we get the word algebra. http://www2.stetson.edu/~efriedma/periodictable/html/Am.html

[51]Ibn al Haythm is well known for his contribution to optics and his use of empirical observations and mathematical proofs in his study of optics. See Abdelhamid I. Sabra, "Ibn al Haythm: Brief Life of an Arab Mathematician; died circa 1040" *Harvard Magazine*. September-October 2003: http://harvardmagazine.com/2003/09/ibn-al-haytham-html

to exhibit knowledge and the ability to use formal classical Arabic. Arabic language classes emphasize writing over reading and bifurcations appear to be growing—between highly educated elites and the popular classes as well as between a classical language and everyday, modern language needs.

The third cultural obstacle covered in the *Report* discusses how Arab popular culture is caught between conformity and creativity. Popular or folk culture is transmitted through the same type of relationships that inform social capital. While the actual knowledge transmitted is the commonsense described by Antonio Gramsci,[52] the tendency towards bifurcation in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab World seems to ensure that the commonsense of the people and the knowledge of intellectual elites do not interact much, if at all. My experience with the cabdriver coming hard on the heels of an interview with a professor exemplifies the gulf between the spontaneous cooperation of the Arab streets and the knowledge of elites.

The final obstacle that the *Report* examines is the relative openness of Arab cultures. Historically, Arab culture was quite open. The *Report*'s authors describe the first great opening and assimilation as the encounter with Greek Civilization. Seeking new knowledge and the translation and assimilation of it went hand in hand with the burgeoning Arab empire. The second great opening discussed by the *Report* is contact with European Civilization in the nineteenth century.[53] The *Report's* authors do not examine the difference between these contacts though. The difference is better examined by a review essay from Richard Bulliet. Muslims came as conquerors to Greek Civilization while contact with European Civilization in the nineteenth century carries

[52] See Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Eds.Quintin Hoare and Geoffery Nowell-Smith(New York: International Publishers Co, 1971).
[53] *2003 Arab Human Development Report*, pp. 6-9 and pp 118-31.

with it the flavor of defeat rather than victory. While Bulliet agrees that the contact has touched off substantial efforts to assimilate knowledge from non-Islamic sources, he is far more inclined than the *Report* authors to argue that this assimilation and diversification is still taking place.[54] These ongoing efforts to assimilate new knowledge through Arabization and Islamization from a position of relative weakness may well account for some of the identity conflict and challenges faced by Arabs today.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the findings of the *2003 Arab Human Development Report* concerning obstacles give background and context for the mission of Cairo University and some of the problems confronting the dissemination, acquisition, and production of knowledge. Problems are primarily rooted in political obstacles. The desire of an authoritarian regime to maintain control results in overt laws to control knowledge and information. However, maintaining emphasis upon cultural and religious values amenable to authoritarianism is also far more engendered by the state than an essential characteristic of Egyptian culture or the Islamic faith. Interpretations were once different and, as the authors of the *Report* note can be changed once again.

## Contemporary Analyses of Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu formulated one of the first articulations of the concept of social capital. Bourdieu's initial treatment defined the concept as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to a possession of a more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintance or recognition."[55] Bourdieu emphasizes the fungibility of all forms of capital; hence, his treatment of social capital is quite

[54] Richard Bulliet, "Islamic Reformation or "Big Crunch": A Review Essay," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 8 (2009), 7–18.
[55]Pierre Bourdieu, "Les Trois Etats du Capitals," Actes Rech. Sci. Soc. 30:3-6 cited in Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Origins and Applications," Annual Review of Sociology 24 (1998): 3.

instrumental. Social capital is made up of two basic elements. The first element is the access to resources possessed by associates in the more or less institutionalized relationships that make up social capital. The second element pertains to the amount and quality of resources. The lack of prominence of Bourdieu's treatment of the social capital concept is unfortunate as his conceptualization focuses on the benefits that accrue to individuals based on participation in groups as well as the purposeful creation of sociability structures to derive benefits.[56]

This value neutral treatment of social capital avoids the ideological baggage often attached to the term. Social relationships are created to allow individuals to access resources. The more recent normative assumptions about the overall value of social capital to society in general are completely missing.

Economist Glenn Loury uses the social capital concept in his critique of orthodox economic theories. Loury asserts that social context does matter to opportunity and that the merit notion fails to take into account the poorer connections of young black workers in the labor market.[57]Loury's tentative use of the social capital concept to critique the overly individualist emphasis of orthodox economic theory paved the way for James Coleman's more well-known treatment.

> Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of a social structure and they facilitate certain actions of individuals in that structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievements of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence.[58]

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[56]Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Origins and Applications," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998):2- 3.
[57]Ibid., 4
[58]James Coleman, *Foundations of Social Capital* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 302

Coleman's definition does little to advance our understanding of how social capital generates access to resources as he generally fails to distinguish between resources and the personal relationships that create access. It does, however, give us a place to begin looking—social structures or general frameworks for how social interactions occur. Coleman familiarized many with the concept of social capital but he lacks Bourdieu's clarity. Coleman's definition suggests that we know social capital when we see it and conflates function with resources. Coleman's work on the concept lends itself to a propensity for tautological statements whereas Bourdieu clearly distinguishes between resources and the social structures cultivated by individuals to access those resources. Nonetheless, it is Coleman's work that has become the better known and more used definition.

Since then several theoretical analyses of social capital have appeared. While political scientist Robert Putnam will be discussed below, the most interesting of these theoretical treatments comes from Ronald S. Burt. Burt's treatment diverges from previous analyses because he highlights holes rather than dense networks. Structural holes refer to disconnections in an individual's network. For example, the gap between intellectual elites and the masses so eloquently expressed by a professor that I interviewed in the introduction to this dissertation is such a hole.

Burt argues that it is more effective and efficient for a person to cultivate smaller and more diverse networks. Smaller, diverse networks can bring in new information and new opportunities whereas dense networks repeat information, thus opportunities are limited.[59]

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[59]Ronald S. Burt. *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 1-2, 20.

Social Capital in the Work of Robert Putnam

Robert Putnam is the most well-known articulator of social capital in the political science literature. No discussion of social capital within the field of political science would be complete without an examination of his work. Putnam's work is as important for its flaws as for its virtues. It is the flaws in his work that have led to a refinement of many questions concerning social capital as a useful concept, the role of civic engagement in successful democracies and vibrant economies, as well as the role of political culture and path dependency as determinants of modern political realities. Hence, I will discuss the flaws in Putnam's work while acknowledging that his work makes a significant contribution to political science.

In *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy,* Putnam's original intention was to examine how a new administrative reform was institutionalized. Specifically, Putnam asked the significant question "*What are the conditions for creating strong, responsive, effective representative institutions?*" (Italics in original).[60] The Italian central government devolved power to regional governments in 1970 and, thus, provided a rare opportunity to study institutional effectiveness. The quantitative portion of Putnam's study makes a strong case that the same institutions perform differently in different contexts. These findings caused Putnam to expand the scope of his study to ask how civic regions became that way and how civic engagement promotes good governance.[61] Putnam shifts from quantitative to qualitative methodologies and while reviewers such as Sidney Tarrow applauded Putnam's linkage between quantitative and

[60]Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*( Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.
[61]Ibid., 116.

qualitative data,[62] the qualitative portion of Putnam's study was carefully scrutinized by reviewers and found wanting. Putnam's problematic use of Italian history[63] to explain differences in civic engagement is, perhaps, the most oft-cited issue with his enlarged study. However, a greater problem may lie in the second question of how civic engagement promotes good governance. The phrasing seems to eliminate the possibility that good governance may promote civic engagement. In other words, the specification of good governance as the causal agent promoting civic engagement obviates the possibility that good governance may well be the crucial causal factor that promotes civic engagement.

In Putnam's argument social capital, defined as "features of social organizations such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society facilitating coordinated actions,"[64] promotes civic engagement and, thus, is the backbone of good governance. According to Putnam, horizontal associational activities are the networks of social capital and by promoting group norms they facilitate the emergence of trust which, in turn, is associated with civic engagement and, hence, good governance. Nonetheless, there is an important problem with Putnam's understanding of trust. While associations may promote within-group trust, it is not clear how that trust is translated into the broader society.[65] Norms constructed within a network or association does not automatically translate into expectations that those outside the network will follow the rules and norms.

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[62]Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection of Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work," *The American Political Science Review. 90* (June, 1996): 389-397.
[63]See FilippoSabetti, "Path Dependency and Civic Culture: Some Lessons from Italy about Interpreting Social Experiments," *Politics & Society* 24 (March, 1996): 19-44 for an extensive discussion concerning Italian history and Putnam's use of Italian history to explain regional variations in modern Italy.
[64]Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 167.
[65]See Margaret Levi, "Social and Unsocial Capital: A Review Essay of Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work." *Politics & Society* 24 (March 1996): 45-55 for a more comprehensive examination of Putnam's failure to effectively conceptualize trust.

Indeed, the more highly developed the rules and norms of a specific community, the more likely it is to be closed to outsiders.[66] In order for rules and norms to be generally understood by those outside the community, they must be codified and enforced. This brings us back to the role of the state. While habits of association may indeed facilitate good governance, good governance may also facilitate social capital.

Levi suggests that it is Putnam's romanticized vision of community that accounts for his failure to clarify the links between social capital, civic engagement, institutional performance, democracy, and a vibrant economy.[67] This romanticized vision leads Putnam to neglect possible structural factors that might be implicated in low social capital. Tarrow argues that it is possible that "while the indicators of malaise might be civic, the causes are structural."[68] A romanticized vision of social capital may well be at the root of the conceptual confusion in Putnam's work as, despite an attempt to clarify his murky understanding of trust, Putnam's subsequent work, *Bowling Alone*, has similar conceptual confusions.

While Putnam clarifies trust to a certain extent in *Bowling Alone*, he still fails to adequately address how societal trust is translated into trust for institutions or even how this might matter. This failure produces something of a problem as trust is one of the components in Putnam's definition of social capital. Putnam's distinction between bonding and bridging social capital serves as a metaphorical device whereby social capital as a concept might escape the particularistic bonds of communities. "Bridging" does elucidate how an ethic of societal pluralism might form.

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[66]Ibid., 50-52.
[67]Ibid., 53.
[68]Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time," 396.

Bridging social capital is a civic and inclusive type of capital. It is outward looking and provides linkages to external assets and provides a means to gain and disseminate information outside of a person's community. Bridging social capital generates broader or multiple identities and linkages amongst diverse social groups. Putnam likens this type of social capital to WD-40 that greases the wheels of social interaction amongst social groupings or communities. Groups may build relations with other groups in common interest areas, thus, linking diverse groups into social relations via issue areas. Putnam argues that it is bridging social capital that facilitates the emergence of generalized reciprocity that is necessary to build broad societal trust. Broad societal trust generates efficiency.[69]

Why should bridging social capital be considered superior to bonding social capital in generating a societal norm of generalized reciprocity or trust? Burt's examination of structural holes has some relevance to the bridging metaphor. Burt asserts that emphasis on a bridging or linking metaphor misses the real causal agent which is the hole or chasm that is spanned. The actual strength of the relationship or bridge is of less interest than is the information and opportunities that can span the hole or chasm.[70] For example, Mohammed Adel, an activist from the Egyptian April 6 Movement, went to Serbia to gain knowledge from CANVAS. CANVAS and the April 6 Movement were not and are not the same network. Mohammed Adel created the bridge by seeking a relationship. This, in essence is how social capital can be used to bring in new information and or resources from outside a network. We might also begin to examine social media with this type of conceptualization in mind. Facebook was not important in and of itself. Its

[69]Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 21-22.
[70]Burt, *Structural Holes*, 25-30.

importance lies in how it serves as a mechanism to bridge holes. Generally, my research indicates that dense networks are less advantageous than some sort of mechanism that bridges a hole or provides a link between networks. New knowledge is better acquired across networks than within densely connected networks. A bridge is simply the link that disseminates the new knowledge.

Social Capital and Bureaucracy

Accordingly, then, in order to examine how social capital pertains to bureaucracy in Egypt we need to focus on whether bureaucracies function more often as a source of institutionalized sources of rationalized procedure or are mired in the arbitrary shifts of administrative power that encourage the perception that the ruler can rule by arbitrary whim as outlined by Ayubi. This question revolves around autonomy or how the bureaucracy is rationalized and procedures made explicit and how the regime may insert patronage into otherwise Weberian rational bureaucracies.

Feddarke et al. suggest that rationalization or formally codified rules and norms facilitate the growth of linkages outside the community. Rationalization is a process of abstracting rules and norms so that they are procedural rather than substantive. Proceduralization improves the comprehensibility of rules and norms to agents outside of the community. Transparency is tied to the specifics of community agents who understand the rules and norms, rationalization abstracts and codifies those rules and norms. Rationalization promotes the gradual replacement of informal associations with formal administrative structures. Individual identity or leadership lessens in importance as rationalization improves the flexibility of social capital.[71]

[71]Johannes Feddarke et al. "Economic Growth and Social Capital": 719-720.

The distinction made by Feddarke et al. between transparency and rationalization is quite useful. Their minimal definition of transparency as comprehensibility is potentially far more functional than they appear to give credit. While rationalization as a proceduralized, codified and abstracted mode of delivery can promote institutionalization of previously informal structures, too much rationalization also stifles economic development. Rationalization must also be transparent or comprehensible. Otherwise it crowds out the flexibility of informal associations and replaces it with cumbersome bureaucracy that has too many procedures for people within and without a given society to gain opportunity and advantage. At a state level rationalization needs to occur but more is not necessarily better. It is far more advantageous for a state to effectively enforce a few codified procedures than continue to ineffectively build a mountain of regulations—none of which can be enforced.

Rationalization and enforcement relate to Peter Evans' notion of embeddedness. In Evans' thought, the concept of embeddedness relates to the ties that develop between bureaucrats and businessmen. While this is a form of social capital, there is frequently a tendency for these types of relationships to deteriorate into crony capitalism. Another way we could look at embeddedness in terms of comprehensibility as well as legitimacy and credibility is to examine precisely what states are rationalizing. This may well be a particular problem for many postcolonial states that might be following well-meaning developmental advice or codifying law based upon norms left by the powers that previously controlled them. Rationalization should proceed from traditional norms and rules. That is, states should be concerned with the codification of rules and norms of the community they purport to rule. This is a better way to understand embeddedness.

Rationalization should be embedded within the society that the state rules as that will produce better transparency.

Unfortunately, as Ayubi notes, bureaucracy may be predicated on patronage and used to maintain regime power and, in particular, to maintain a particular leader. Egyptian bureaucracy contains a mixture of rationalization and patronage with certain bureaucratic positions and occupants of those positions owing far more to the state's leadership than bureaucratic channels of merit. The Faculty of Economics and Political Science finds itself here as, although strongly committed to Weberian bureaucratic norms, some appointments are entirely political. The security presence on campus also functions as Ayubi argues—a point of disruption to rationalization or institutionalization that maintains the regime as the focal point of power and access.[72] These positions wherein the regime maintains its power by making itself the guarantor of pay, power, and prestige depoliticize the university through the politicization of appointment. The work of Ayubi and Feddarke et al. contain insights for the puzzle of an Egypt that is relatively well-institutionalized or rationalized as Feddarke et al. would have it while mired in patronage politics. The entire bureaucratic establishment need not be built on patronage but through strategic appointments.

## Conclusion

Persistent authoritarianism and failure to initiate any kind of democratic transition is what truly marks the Arab Middle East as different and, indeed, exceptional. Structural explanations that examine the effects of colonialism, place in the world economy, or rely on other institutional or structural mechanisms have all sought to explain the persistence

[72] Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between the "Red Lines'" discusses the appointment of university presidents as well as deans by the state. The same report discusses the security presence on campuses.

of authoritarianism in the region. Eva Bellin's explanation relies upon Theda Skocpol's key insight that it is the will and capacity of security forces to contain the people that explain when a social revolution will occur. This insight also explains whether or not a democratic transition or political revolution can occur. Bellin's novel approach does contribute strongly to our understanding of the failure of Egypt to initiate a democratic transition before the Arab Spring through the provision of a matrix of variables pertaining to the will and capacity of the security apparatus that interact to produce transition or continuation of the status quo.

Persistent authoritarianism is the political context within which Cairo University operates and impacts the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. It is a strong contributor to the knowledge deficit or failure to create a knowledge society as outlined by the *2003 Arab Human Development Report.* Indeed, the cultural obstacles that the *Report* details provide context. However, it is the political obstacles that more strongly hinder research and the quest for knowledge on the part of professors and students alike. The state controls the university in such a manner as to render it a neutered political force that does not organize opposition or initiate calls to reform.

While control is well outlined by Bellin's approach, I will argue that the environment that affects university is better understood through the social capital concept. Specifically, I will show how the rationalization and proceduralization that constitutes a Weberian type bureaucracy has been impacted by strategic political appointments that allow the state to exert control over the university. This question strongly relates to how the Faculty of Economics and Political Science operates within the context of an authoritarian state. What networks are formed? How have state controls inhibited the

interaction of intellectuals and the masses? How do the political obstacles used by the state to inhibit democratic transitions contribute to a knowledge deficit?

In the following pages, I will address these questions that I have raised as they relate to my argument. The theoretical concepts of structural theories, particularly Bellin's articulation of the factors that impact initiations of democratic transitions, as well as the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*'s examination of obstacles to a knowledge society and social capital are all concepts that can structure our understanding of the environment in which the Faculty of Economics and Political Science carry out scholarly tasks. Further this promotes understanding of what factors changed to allow the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and why youth were so strongly represented in demonstrations but the university appeared completely irrelevant. Inquiry into a depoliticized university by an authoritarian state and the protests that emerged in 2011 to overthrow Mubarak can be explored with the same concepts. These concepts include Bellin's international support networks, fiscal health, popular mobilization and will of the coercive apparatus as well as social capital and the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*'s concept of the knowledge society and obstacles to building it. The issues are interrelated and within the following pages I will tease out those relationships. First, however, I will briefly examine the history of modern education in Egypt in order to better establish our understanding of how the university became depoliticized as well as the particular issues Egypt has faced with regard to education.

# CHAPTER 3

# EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

## Introduction

In the following pages I will discuss the historical role of scholars and the quest for knowledge within the Islamic Civilization. I will further contextualize our discussion of current problems at Cairo University with a brief discussion of modern political uses of education generally before proceeding to a brief history of the Cairo University and its depoliticization. University professors and graduate students I spoke with at Cairo University's Faculty of Economics and Political Science were generally personally devoted to knowledge but also needed to maintain their own job security. They were not interested in losing opportunities but sought to acquire, disseminate, and produce knowledge within the confines of an authoritarian state that places controls over academics and university life. This chapter elucidates the background of how that unfolds through a discussion of Egyptian educational history.

Before proceeding to the current findings and modern research, I discuss the historical foundations of the Islamic Golden Age for the type of knowledge society that *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* seeks to emulate. The historical antecedents for free inquiry are present without solely emulating the West. How this was done may prove

important to reproducing bridging social capital within the region that facilitates rather than inhibits the search for knowledge. I will explore the history of modern education, largely held to have begun with the reign of Muhammad Ali. I also briefly discuss the origins and history of Cairo University and the gradual imposition of control mechanisms by the state. The founders and early scholars of Cairo University dreamed of an institution that would promote research and knowledge. Today's scholars also dream of that and have ideas about how that might be accomplished despite funding constraints and state control mechanisms. In order to better understand both their hopes and constraints, we need to know something about history.

## *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* and the Islamic Golden Age

Currently the state of Arab knowledge is marked by importation and imitation rather than innovation. However, this was not always the case. A scholarly character that flowered in conjunction with Abbasid rule marks historical Islamic culture. The Abbasids ruled from Baghdad and supported a renaissance under the auspices of Qur'anic injunctions to seek knowledge as well as more practical and mundane needs. The humanities and social sciences were the first to flower under Abbasid rule but a growing empire needed to address practical problems. Many of the scientific applications contributed by Arab scholars were in response to genuine needs of administration and development.

The authors of the *Arab Human Development Report* remark at some length how translation preceded and encouraged innovation. Albert Hourani also remarks upon the support the Abbasids gave to the translation of Greek knowledge into Arabic. While

some of this was purely practical, Hourani asserts that intellectual curiosity was also a significant factor that encouraged innovation and promoted the Islamic Golden Age.[73] Too, knowledge from Iran and India was translated into Arabic. This produced a synthesis of far-flung knowledge and scholars who were able to build upon that knowledge. This stands in stark contrast to the situation in modern day Egypt wherein translation is scarce[74] and students and professors struggle to gain access to scholarly materials.

With the support of rulers and religion an open scholarly culture developed. The Islamic civilization, in which Arabs played a large role, significantly contributed to human knowledge. Two of their greatest achievements include development of mathematical rationality and the use of experimentation as a method of proof.

Currently that open, innovative culture bequeathed to modern Arabs has stagnated and a certain reluctance towards critical inquiry prevails in the present-day Arab states. Educational systems and authoritarian states may be, at least partly, to blame. The authors indicate that reliance on rote memorization is prevalent in the region and the humanities and social sciences that have such strong impact on creativity, innovation, and critical inquiry are controlled by the state.

*The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* postulates three factors as important to the development and establishment of the Islamic scholarly city. The first pertains to the provision of resources by political and social authorities. The second factor arose from the practical needs of the community. The diversity of the Abbasid Empire required

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[73] Albert Hourani. *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1993), 133-34.
[74] *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* states that only 330 books are translated into Arabic each year for the entire Arab-speaking region. This is one-fifth the amount translated by Greece on a yearly basis.

organization and science was needed for practical problem solving. Finally, the authors note that the explosion of research and practical applications of sciences was preceded by development in the humanities and social sciences as previously stated.

Humanities and social sciences developed first largely as a means to better understand the Qur'an. As the early Muslims spread through conquest of surrounding areas they encountered new situations as well as peoples with other knowledge bases. Linguistics—the study of Arabic—emerged to better understand the word of God and imbued Arabic with words and concepts better able to handle philosophy, theology, and scientific abstraction. Arabic grammars were also constructed fairly early on in order to aid new converts in understanding the *Qur'an*. The need to make vague *Qur'anic* principles applicable to everyday life drove a fair amount of intellectual activities. The science of *hadith* (narrative of actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) stemmed from just such practical needs as did the limitation on what was accepted as authentic *hadith*. Beyond *hadith* came law and the foundation of legal schools to interpret the Qur'an and *hadith* as a guide to everyday behavior.

The second factor asserted by *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* that practical problem solving drove the search for new knowledge and its practical application also finds substantiation in the literature. For example, Stanton notes that al-Khwarizimi developed algebra as a practical tool to solve problems in inheritance, commerce, and lawsuits.[75]

The provision of resources by political and social authorities may be somewhat more problematic and is certainly less straightforward. A system of education and higher

[75] Charles Michael Stanton. *Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period A.D., 700-1300* (Savage, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 1990), 9-11/ 22-29.

learning did develop in the Islamic Civilization quite early in its history but it may well be that this system served more to create civil servants than to foment research and development. In other words, the educational system most patronized by rulers and societal benefactors may have functioned more to promote a particular point of view and, thus, support a certain social order. This type of traditional education that relies on rote memorization usually serves to reinforce social hierarchies and traditional authorities.

The modern Arab state appears to rely on traditional methods of rote memorization to teach modern subjects as well as reinforce compliance to state hierarchies and authorities, hence, reinforcing its own rule. Like classical authorities within the Islamic Civilization, modern rulers prefer to institutionalize methods of learning that lend themselves to stability and hierarchy over free inquiry.

Intriguingly many of the practical issues and encounters with diverse knowledge sources that drove the Islamic Golden Age to achieve advances in knowledge are also present in the current era. It is curious that the challenges incurred by a growing empire were met with an attitude of inquisitiveness and exploration of knowledge while the challenge that came from Europe in the nineteenth century has been met with a less than open attitude and a strategic importation of knowledge. Religious culture cannot possibly be dismissed as a component of this puzzle. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to sort out such startlingly different reactions to similar problems, the difference does need to be noted as the Arab Middle East grapples with significant development issues as indicated by *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report.*

## Historical Overview of Education in Egypt

The traditional systemic order of education was destabilized in the nineteenth century as a new order rose but did not supplant the old system. Instead the new existed right alongside the traditional. Heyworth-Dunne notes that

> It is in the nineteenth [century] that we get, not exactly a complete change in the social and intellectual life of Egypt, but the introduction of another culture, quite new to Egypt, the growth of which was encouraged at the expense of the old system. The methods and ideas of the old intellectual world were not only still used, however, but largely determined the new methods and the conflict of two cultures became the dominant feature of the nineteenth century.[76]

Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman General sent to roust the French out of Egypt, introduced a number of educational innovations in his quest for a powerful, modernized state. Like the Ottomans in Istanbul, Muhammad Ali was interested in matching European power and many of his educational reforms showed this intent. The religious education traditional to Egypt did not prepare Egyptians to fulfill the technical needs required by Muhammad Ali's ascent to power. He required specialist training and skills to modernize Egypt. Traditional religious instruction had not been designed to educate the technical specialists needed to build a modern state able to hold its own with European powers. Traditional education was designed to perpetuate and maintain the traditional systemic order—not to meet the European challenge.

Muhammad Ali developed a strategy of education predicated on specialist training to produce the military and technical personnel needed for his modernization plans.[77] He sent missions to Europe to acquire the technical training and skills not found in Egypt's traditional educational institutions. Muhammad Ali established institutions of higher

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[76] J. Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1968), 1.
[77] Williams, *Education and Social Change*, 62

learning and technical training before establishing a basic mass education consisting of primary and secondary schools.[78] Schools were administered by a central educational administration called the *Diwan al Madaris*.[79]

Centralized administration and a bifurcated educational process were evident at the advent of modern reform. Centralized administration encouraged the subordination of education to state purposes and bypassed the traditional elite. General mass education was rather poorly developed. Muhammad Ali's reforms thus established divergence as a structural feature into Egyptian education. First a bifurcation occurred between traditionally educated religious elites and a technically trained elite influenced by Europe. A further differentiation was introduced between basic mass education still largely influenced by the traditional method of schooling the *kuttab,* which aimed to instill an Islamic code of conduct supportive of the traditional order and the technical and specialist needs of a modernizing state.

Muhammad Ali's reforms hardly survived the gutting of his power in the 1840s and the profligacy of his heirs. However, modern education can be traced back to his rule. Muhammad Ali initiated the conditions that would sustain further demands for modernization and independence by Egyptian elites. Williamson writes, "The roots, therefore, of powerful expectations about education and national independence can be traced to the period of Muhammad Ali's reforms and the changes they unleashed on Egyptian society."[80]

The British invaded in 1882 with the stated intention of restoring order and revamping the Egyptian administration to ensure prompt payment of Egypt's large foreign debt. The

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[78] Judith Cochrane, *Education in Egypt* (Dover, NH: Croom Helm Ltd., 1986), 4.
[79] Heyworth-Dunne, *History of Modern Education*, 226.
[80] Williamson, *Educational and Social Change*, 67.

British perceived finance and debt as particularly acute and of the utmost importance to address and, thus, gave low priority to education—an expenditure. When the British finally turned their attention to education they were anxious to avoid perceived mistakes in India. Largely molded by Lord Cromer, Egyptian education was intended to produce masses instructed in basic rudimentary subjects.[81] The British articulated minimal educational goals that included "staffing local civil service, the creation of a thrifty peasantry, and an artisan class skilled in European manufactures."[82] The British wished to avoid the creation of an intellectual class resistant to colonial authority as in India.[83] Education was to be limited to the needs perceived by the colonial authorities.

The British also deepened the bifurcations and divisions introduced by Muhammad Ali.

> In Egypt, educational effort was therefore to be split along class and geographical axes, reinforcing barriers between country and city and maintaining an appropriate class hierarchy. The course of instruction in elementary schools or kuttabs—usually the only school available outside the provincial capitals—did not allow successful students to continue on to European-language education in preparatory and technical schools, or obtain the certificates that would allow them employment in the civil service.[84]

Further, the British solidified the connection between education and civil service.[85] Consistent with their goal of producing a compliant Egyptian administration, the British system discouraged independent thinking and, instead, promoted memorization. Memorization was a crucial component for civil service exam preparation. Governmental needs, as determined by the British, dictated secondary exams and

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[81] Robert Tignor, "The 'Indianization' of the Egyptian Administration under British Rule." *The American Historical Review* 68 (Apr., 1963): 657.
[82] Gregory Starett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 31
[83]Tignor, Starett
[84]Starett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 31.
[85]Tignor, "The 'Indianization' of the Egyptian Administration," 659.

educational opportunities. The intent was to discourage, if not prevent, students from seeking further education. Critical thinking and free inquiry were also discouraged. Opportunities were restricted through examinations, fees, and a lack of facilities.[86]

The differentiated track of religious education underwent no changes and "the curriculum of elite government schools encouraged submission to authority and passiveness which limited independent thought."[87] The British were not interested in either the personal development of Egyptians or the needs of a society undergoing a late modernization process.[88]

The British conceded nominal independence to Egypt in 1920. Egyptian nationalists had severely criticized British policy as retarding educational development.[89] The nominally independent Egyptian state inherited a system that enhanced class and geographical cleavages and was further limited by a lack of financial resources. Nonetheless, and not surprisingly, the Egyptian Constitution of 1923 "mandated that primary education be free and compulsory for all children from six to twelve."[90] In the best tradition of nationalist and industrializing policy the Egyptian administration had, as its first goal, the elimination of illiteracy as well as the creation of a unified, basic education for the entire country.[91]

The constitutional mandates of 1923 reflect Gellner's observations that industrializing and modernizing societies require a unifying, school-transmitted culture and not a

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[86]Cohcran, *Education in Egypt*, 12-13
[87]Ibid., 13.
[88] Late modernizer refers to a state undergoing the modernization process with the advanced, industrialized states already in existence. Late modernizers, particularly former colonies such as Egypt, tend to experience the bifurcations we find in Egypt.
[89] Williamson, *Education and Social Change*, 107
[90] Cochran, *Education in Egypt*, 23.
[91] Ibid., 22.

traditional folk-transmitted one.[92] Gellner's work explicates why traditional Islamic education with its emphasis on inculcating an honor code and stabilizing and maintaining a traditional systemic order is ill-suited to the needs of an industrializing and centralizing state. Industrialization requires a literate workforce that will allow for technical specialization. Literacy promotes adaptability while unification and centralization of a school system provides a pool of similarly educated workers. However as a late industrializer and modernizer, Egypt needed to educated leaders able to develop an Egypt competitive with the advanced, industrialized powers. The sheer difficulty of simultaneously creating a national educational system and developing elites competitive with European elites coupled with a lack of resources made a dual track system nearly inevitable.

Elementary and compulsory schools were intended to "provide a tuition-free education to the masses with great stress on religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic."[93] The goal of universal literacy went largely unmet due to the financial limitations of the nascent Egyptian state. The primary school system was meant to provide an education for the future leaders of Egypt, but charged tuition until 1943. Primary schools delivered a superior education but further enhanced class and geographical divisions. Rural and poor students had better access to elementary and compulsory schools while the urban and moderately well to do filled out primary school enrollments.

Egypt, Knowledge and the State

The socialist reforms of Nasser finally centralized the educational administration and standardized curriculum throughout Egypt. Nasser believed the army to be the only

[92] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 36.
[93] Cochran, *Education in Egypt*, 23.

institution able to create a national educational system that would eliminate or, at least, ameliorate class and geographical differences and conflicts, hence the extension of military influence into schools.[94] Emphasis on the military is consistent with Nasser's conviction that only the army was capable of producing a single, unified Egyptian identity. As in Gellner's work, schools were the medium of transmission for a national culture and identity. In practice, Nasser's regime adopted the French model that had already taken root in Egypt but placed a stronger emphasis on Arabic and incorporated military training.[95] Nasser's intention was to promote patriotism and nationalism. A strong emphasis on Arabic promoted Egypt's Arab identity and a sense of Arabism while turning away from European languages as the source of modern education.

Despite numerous difficulties, the educational system was unified and standardized by 1970. Typical of the French system, students were required to pass centrally standardized examinations to proceed to the next level. While testing had the advantage of encouraging a unified and standardized national educational system, it had the unfortunate side effect of strengthening an already existing tendency towards the memorization of material to pass exams. The British who, by no means, wanted independent thinkers sitting for civil service examinations had also encouraged rote memorization, already evident in traditional education. Too, Nasser's promise of government employment to university graduates echoed a British policy that associated education with civil employment.

The Nasser regime was responsible for:

> (1) the rationalization of educational provision and removal of fees (2) the

[94]Cochran, Education in Egypt, 43.
[95]Linda Herrera, *Scenes of Schooling: Inside a Girls' School in Cairo* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1992), 2.

> expansion of education at all levels in the system and (3) the inclusion of an Arab nationalist orientation into the curricula of both school and university courses and the use of schools as agencies of political socialization.[96]

Although not eliminated, illiteracy was greatly reduced by Nasser's reforms. Despite success in a number of areas, Nasser's reforms are also associated with a number of problems.

Nasserist ideology required that Egypt, as an Arab leader, share resources with other Arab countries as well as extending a general invitation to all Arabs to study in Egypt. Resource sharing very nearly overwhelmed Egypt's educational system. Added to the burden of education of the Arab World were Nasser's military commitments that further depleted financial resources. In other words, Nasser's ideological commitment to leadership and unification of the Arab World overextended Egyptian resources. Cochran writes

> While Nasser remained an idol to the rest of the Arab World, his use of military force and Arab nationalism to implement a unified philosophy overwhelmed Egyptian education. The elite-masses dichotomy had been destroyed in favor of mass-secular education of questionable quality….The theory seemed humanitarian but its implementation proved unmanageable.[97]

Nasser's overextension, due to ideological commitments, undermined the achievements of his regime.

Intending to improve Egypt's educational system as well as improve the overall Egyptian economy, Sadat's *infitah* or open door policy reintroduced class and geographical differences into education. The masses attended overcrowded, poorly funded government schools, while once again private foreign language schools produced graduates better able to compete for high-paying jobs in the private sector.

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[96]Williamson, *Education and Social Change*, 118-119.
[97]Cochran, *Education in Egypt*, 52

Educational reform is now a near perennial project of the Egyptian state. Sadat's policies, intended to raise educational quality, exacerbated divisions and conflicts between rich and poor, rural and urban, foreign and Egyptian. *Infitah* rapidly reproduced the conditions found in the nominally independent Egyptian state of the pre-Nasserist period. The population explosion put further pressure on an already severely constrained educational system. Egypt is unable to sustain the mass educational needs of its rapidly expanding population while simultaneously improving educational quality. While the Egyptian state and people are clearly committed to the goal of an education that effectively enables Egyptian youth to participate in the global economy, implementation of policy goals is problematic and the prioritization of power maintenance by the ruling regime further hinders the development and implementation of educational policy that will produce a truly competitive Egyptian youth.

Sadat's *infitah* policy encouraged foreign investment in the Egyptian educational system. The Camp David Accords also resulted in a strong American aid presence—administered by USAID. The reintroduction of foreign investment and aid means that extranational actors also set educational policy goals. While popular support for improving modern education is extensive and foreign and national actors display an apparent commitment to common goals, a greater number of actors exacerbate conflict over implementation. Ayubi's contention that Arab bureaucracy is marked by power consciousness is applicable here. Access to the ruler, to funding and maintenance of administrative power bases likely undercuts coherent policy formulation and implementation. The efficient hierarchy and routinization of Weberian bureaucracy is personalized by power considerations. Conflict is usually further heightened when some

of those actors are foreign and the state is a late modernizer once administered by a European colonial authority.

Cairo University: Its foundation and history

As noted in Chapter 1, Cairo University was founded in 1908 with the mandate of 'knowledge for knowledge sake' as a secular alternative to the education offered at *Al-Azhar*.[98] Cairo University, once known as the Egyptian University, was founded as a liberal arts college that made research a cornerstone of its mission. Originally a private institution, Cairo University became Egypt's first state university in 1925 when it found itself unable to generate sufficient funds to meet the growing demand from Egyptians for a secular, liberal arts education founded on the European model. The university demanded as much autonomy as possible from the Ministry of Education as a condition for accepting a reorganization that turned it into a Faculty of Arts and added a Faculty of Science.[99]

Overall quality of education deteriorated under Nasser's popularization of the universities. University enrollments exploded and Cairo University's student population grew two and one half times.[100] The idea was quite similar to the ones implemented by Nasser at the primary and secondary levels. As Cochran notes, however, although the ideas seemed good ones and far more egalitarian than previous policies, the implementation was impracticable as funding could not keep up with burgeoning enrollments. At the root of popularization was an overall political agenda that promoted

[98] Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between the 'Red Lines'": 18.
[99] Ibid., 19.
[100] Ibid.

the idea that the university and, indeed, knowledge was not for knowledge sake but for the state's sake.

The mandate that emphasized a liberal arts education and university autonomy too foundered upon Nasser's emphasis on technical learning to industrialize Egypt and his use of the university as a means of inculcating a national ideology. Nasser wanted professors to articulate an Arab nationalist ideology and freedom of thought, speech, and action were suppressed in favor of a state-sponsored use of the university as a tool of the regime's development goals. The goals at the university level were the same as those for primary and secondary schools. A people would be built that were unified and able to contribute to the economic development of Egypt as envisaged by Nasserist ideology. It was in the Nasser era that police informants became ubiquitous and Cairo University lost substantial autonomy and became, instead, a government bureau.[101]

Sadat initially reversed some of his predecessor's policies. Sadat reduced some restrictions on the university by allowing professors to elect their deans and removing the police presence on campus. Student activities were also facilitated although Sadat reversed this policy with the University Law of 1979. The University Law of 1979 was part of a two-prong strategy meant to counter Marxist-Nasserist student activism. First Sadat increased surveillance and control by augmenting the numbers of student informants and using presidential security men to masquerade as students. The overall purpose for the masquerade was to infiltrate student organizations.[102] The second part of the strategy was to encourage what was then, Islamic religious activism to counter the left. Sadat's two-prong strategy used to rid the ruling regime of troublesome radicalized

[101]Ibid., 24.
[102]Kirk J. Beattie.*Egypt During the Sadat Years* (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2000), 102.

leftist elements appears to have strengthened the politicization of Islam, resulting in a stronger Islamist presence.

The overall legacy from the Sadat years is continued state repression of the academy and the promotion of a sociopolitical movement that is not necessarily friendly to academic freedom. Further in attempting to curb the problems caused by Nasser's over reach through *infitah,*[103]Sadat reproduced many of the problems that plagued newly independent Egypt. The Mubarak regime has consolidated repression of academic freedom. Curbs on freedom are pervasive although not generally visible.

## Conclusion

Although the current era shares certain issues with the era of Islamic empire, solutions have differed dramatically. The initial spread of Islam out of Arabia advanced an atmosphere of translation of foreign knowledge and critical inquiry to support the needs of burgeoning empire. The modern era appears to view both foreign knowledge and critical inquiry with suspicion. In the post Golden Age of Islam, rote learning was institutionalized to promote stability within the Islamic Civilization. Rote memorization has persisted into current times and is one of the hobbles to a free spirit of critical inquiry that *The2003 Arab Human Development Report* insists the region is capable of.

The support for rote memorization had its political uses traditionally as well as currently. Just as the British found it expedient to discourage independence of thought, so too, does the Egyptian ruling regime. Surveillance, coercion, and legal controls have been established to depoliticize the university and maintain the population, particularly the student population, in a state of political dormancy. In this atmosphere a knowledge

[103]*Infitah*means opening and refers to the opening of Egypt to outside investors, the opening of the economy as well as of society.

society cannot flourish. Inasmuch as a university is a microcosm of a knowledge society wherein knowledge and information are freely acquired, disseminated, and produced the university also cannot freely flourish in its mission. In order to accomplish the minimal tasks pursued by a university, professors and students must depoliticize.

# CHAPTER 4

# FUNDING AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

## Introduction

The senior professors I interviewed asserted that they were short on time and preferred to answer the questions they thought most important first. The two questions that they all found most important were those having to do with funding and academic freedom. The importance and urgency that senior professors attached to the issues of funding and academic freedom deserved to be treated separately. They spoke at length on either one or both of these issues and echoed concerns and problems that have plagued Egyptian education since the time of Mohammed Ali. Senior professors were quite concerned regarding the overall deterioration of Egypt's educational system. Several had some ideas concerning how funding for higher education could be improved as well as some suggestions for some of the private institutions that are being built to give students unable to go to the national universities another option.

While some senior professors claimed that academic freedom was not much of an issue and that red lines are easily sidestepped by the use of alternate language, at least one asserted that "there is no academic freedom in Egypt." Both the state and societal

actors hamper the free exercise of thought and speech in Egypt. There is on the one hand state prosecution of academic Saad Eddin Ibrahim. On the other, the charges brought by Islamists against Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid served as notice that the state would not protect academic research from societal pressures.[104]

The people ought not to be romanticized. Egyptian society is not at all liberal in the classical sense of the word. Removal of the state apparatus would not necessarily reveal a liberal democracy waiting to spring forth. Nonetheless, individuals have shown themselves to be able to take advantage of different structures that facilitate the bridging kind of social capital. The culture, history, and religion of a society do matter, as Putnam's study in Italy asserts. However, the state's efforts to depoliticize and render the university quiescent as well as its refusal to defend academics from Islamists makes the authoritarian state a far more important force here contributing to the knowledge deficit and hence the restrictions on knowledge found at Cairo University.

An emphasis on funding and academic freedom may well serve to give some ideas concerning how reform of the state could facilitate a knowledge society or once again promote Cairo University's original mandate of 'knowledge for knowledge sake' rather than hindering it as it does now. This is less the romanticized, bottom-up version of social capital causing good governance and economic efficiency as Putnam appears to argue but, rather, the better use of the state's ability to constrain as well as to build bridges (or at least remove impediments) that can cross the structural holes that this dissertation is finding to be applicable to Egypt. These holes have, in turn, promoted the depoliticization and irrelevance of the university to modern political life in Cairo.

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[104]Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between the "'Red Lines'," pp. 45-48, 2.

University inability to maintain autonomy and the use of positions reliant on state patronage have undermined the search for knowledge that Cairo University was originally charged with and rendered the university less able to be the site that serves to produce challenge and reform. Indeed, traditional methods of instruction and the strategic use of patronage positions within the university have turned it into an institution that helps maintain regime power and is subservient to the state. The original mandate of 'knowledge for knowledge sake' might be more appropriately rendered 'knowledge for the state's sake'. In other words, the political obstacles outlined by *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* inhibit and constrain the university mission. The university mission is quite similar to the knowledge society as described by the *2003 Report* that acquires, disseminates, and produces knowledge.

## Education and Money

Lack of funds affects the entire Egyptian educational system. Public learning facilities are inadequate and outdated throughout the system. Overcrowding begins early with primary school classes often containing around fifty students. Teachers are poorly compensated and while some will try to educate all of their students, most devote their time to the tutorial groups that they teach for a fee after regular school hours. Those tutorials are designed to maximize student scores on exams and teachers may spend their days off, afternoons, and evenings with smaller more manageable groups of students that pay for the tutoring needed to get high exam scores. While private schools are the best ones in Egypt, all Egyptians effectively pay for education. Those who cannot pay for tutoring cannot hope to improve their children's prospects.

Exams culminate into the *al thaniwiyya al'aamiyya*or leaving exam. It is that exam that determines which Faculty a student can enter after secondary school. The university is free to all students with satisfactory *al thaniwiyya al'aamiyya* scores and students who score better than 80 percent get financial awards from the state. One professor told me that hundreds of thousands are enrolled at national universities. According to the Egyptian constitution higher education is completely free to students—although there is some indication that free is becoming free like primary, middle, and secondary schools. Many students come from very poor families and are also eligible for financial awards. In fact, with subsidies available for texts and housing as well as free dorms, students should not, theoretically, have to pay for anything. The state is overwhelmed with the financial burden. In other words, the lack of money is a part of the problem fueling the knowledge deficit and constraining university personnel. This also has an impact on the structural hole between intellectuals and the people or society that a social capital lens can help us uncover. The people are a part of the problem and recipients of education and financial aid but not really addressed as a part of a possible solution.

A professor who informed me of the financial failures that caused the Ministry of Finance to look to the university as a fund raiser also shared some possible solutions. He suggested a nominal tuition be imposed for students who had the financial means. He was not suggesting that students foot the entire bill or even match state funds but that a low tuition imposed upon middle class students would alleviate the financial strain somewhat. The law was rejected and many professors and university administrative officials and staff actively opposed the law as it would have meant the abolition of free

education. The abolition of free education was perceived as further fragmenting a society already fragmented by class and social inequalities.

Another possible solution my informant argued for was the reactivation of the *waqf*. The Islamic *waqf*(pl. *awqaf*) is an endowment made for religious or charitable purposes. Historically, *waqf* (endowment, public trust) institutions funded the *madrassah*[105] system, hospitals, medical schools as well as students. According to my informant, Cairo University was initially established as an NGO or endowment from Ismail Pasha's daughter who donated jewelry and then Egyptians came up with the rest of the money to build the university. In 1952 a law was issued prohibiting Egyptians from leaving money to *awqaf*. Abolishing the anti-*waqf* law could alleviate some of the funding problem as many Muslims might be willing to leave money to a *waqf* established for education. Well-off Muslims might also be willing to create such endowments. While the state may look in askance at the reassertion of an Islamic institution and state officials might fear them as promoting an Islamic backwardness and parochialism, the *waqf* has strong legitimacy among the masses as well as an historical legacy that dates back to the institutionalization of education, hospitals and so on within the Islamic civilization. *Waqf*s also endowed several of the *halaqas* that lent themselves to the type of free inquiry *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* wants to see reestablished.

*Waqf* would, however, would mean a competitor to the state in terms of funding to universities and, hence, it would loosen some controls that the state has put into place. While the state might find traditional methods of learning useful, the ruling regime does not appear to want competition from traditional means of societal and individual

[105]*Madrassah* has become an overused word that has lost its original meaning for Westerners. *Madrassah* originates from the Arabic root d-r-s, which means to study. Hence, *madrassah* is a place to study and is generally a synonym for school.

exercises of power. A reintroduction of *awqaf* would gain the benefit described by Feddarke et al in Chapter Two. It would bring in a society-centric solution to funding problems that is transparent and comprehensible to the public. Hence, *awqaf* could partake of the positive type of bureaucratic social capital examined by Feddarke et al. and reiterated by Bellin in terms of institutionalization.

Students who are not eligible for financial awards frequently attend private universities. Other than the American University of Cairo, these schools are of low quality. My informant argued that the money rich businessmen spend to found and own a university would be better utilized by the national universities. If the *waqf* system were revived, there would be greater incentive for wealthy businessmen to establish *awqaf* in their names or to leave money to established *awqaf* as a form of *zakat* or *sadaqa* (charity). This sort of system would be analogous to the endowment of chairs at American universities or scholarship funds set up by private individuals for specific types of students. Endowments and scholarships would, then, be a form of bridging social capital that would act as a mechanism spanning a hole between the public and the university.

Another senior professor felt that the private universities had potential. Unfortunately, she claimed, they were undermined by poor quality students as only students who do not get the required grades to attend the free national universities enroll in them. She said that exceptions were increasing though as private universities have fewer students and are often more conveniently located. Nonetheless, these private universities kept very lenient standards so that all might pass. Lenient standards do not make a degree worth too much on the job market.

It is possible that private universities may have some potential but their very low quality does not appear likely to rise without some form of incentive. Whether, as the second professor would have it, that would come in the form of student demand as more qualified people opted to attend a private university or came from above in the form of higher standards set by the university founder and administration is a social capital type of question. Will demand for better education come from the bottom-up or the top-down? There is a case to be made for both. Students and their parents want a degree that will help them get a job in a job market that is not producing nearly enough employment for its youth. If someone founds a university for reasons of prestige and Islamic charity, they might find it more prestigious and worthwhile from a civic point of view to promote higher standards. Which has more impact? Further, does this problematique run into the same obstacles that the national universities encounter wherein students expect to memorize to pass an exam? Will student expectations quash reforms that improve standards as much as the authoritarian state does? Arguably such solutions that are to be found in the revival of the *waqf* might very well serve to produce a linking mechanism or bridge whereby such questions are constantly negotiated by institutions and the society they serve to educate.

All professors spoke highly of the quality of education found at the American University of Cairo—a private university. With its American-style liberal arts emphasis, the AUC educates Egypt's elite. Professors have more freedom at the AUC than at Cairo University and many professors teach at both institutions and are in a position to speak of those differences. There are two noticeable differences between the private American university and the national universities. First is the level of academic freedom and

expectations of students. Second, the students at AUC are different. They are a part of the westernized elite of Egypt. AUC is expensive and most Egyptians cannot afford to go but would they, if they could?

A very new professor (fresh from her dissertation defense) suggested that they might not. She asserted that private foreign universities were not in harmony with society. Differing teaching methods and administrative structure at private, foreign universities advances a divide between society and these universities. The elite, Westernized education offered at private foreign universities was superior to Egyptian education but too alien and too expensive to have much impact on most Egyptians. Rote learning is not conducive to the American liberal arts style education purveyed by the AUC. Other private foreign universities are generally European and are also grounded in a Western style liberal arts education. There is a structural hole here then wherein only already Westernized elite students—likely products of foreign run private schools—are best able to take full advantage of private foreign universities while most of society's students would struggle academically and financially. Is there any bridge for this structural hole?

There very well may be a bridge. There was once an Islamic liberal arts education. A liberal arts education was called *adab* and someone who had mastered the polite generalized knowledge of *adab* was called *adib*. *Adab* was pursued by those of the middle and upper socioeconomic classes and was particularly encouraged for government officials. *Adab* was thought to facilitate administration of government affairs as it promoted the generalized knowledge and rational faculties that underpin the ability of individuals to understand, extrapolate, and problem solve. The study of *adab* was pursued quite informally and a number of Muslim polymaths authored texts covering

general knowledge. One of the most comprehensive of these was Abu Abdallah al Khwarzimi's (not to be confused with the famed mathematician Musa Al Khwarazimi) two-volume encyclopedia of knowledge.[106]

So why did *adab* die out? Like the informal *halaqa* that produced prodigious knowledge during the Islamic Golden Age, the Islamic liberal arts education was not institutionalized. Muslims institutionalized the kind of learning that lends itself to stability–rote learning. The emphasis on rote learning continued even as Muslims generally and Egypt specifically imported knowledge from the West. Muhammad Ali, considered Egypt's first modernizer of education, was not interested in revising the method of learning—just the subjects studied. Like many Middle Eastern rulers, Muhammad Ali was a defensive modernizer. Ali wanted European learning and technology so as to defend Egypt from European encroachment and compete more effectively with European power. Maintenance of traditional rote learning and the bifurcated system that Ali introduced also ensured relatively greater political stability during a time already marked by significant change. Traditional learning is to teach everyone their place and role in society. The introduction of modern subject matter while retaining traditional rote learning appears to have much the same effect. Rote learning is not conducive to creativity and will not produce another Golden Age for the Arab world. Unlike the period of collection and translation of knowledge that began the Golden Age, knowledge from Europe was not Islamized and, thus, authenticated. As noted in Chapter 3, responses to the challenges of expanding empire and Western encroachment have differed dramatically, no matter how similar the underlying problems are.

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[106] Stanton. *Higher Learning in Islam*, 43-46.

Reintroducing *adab* or an Islamic liberal arts education could encourage Egyptian society to perceive this style of learning as authentic—not just an alien Western import that might be destructive to Islamic values. Currently most Egyptians consume information quite strategically and only learn or memorize for exams. General knowledge is not perceived as useful. Much as Muhammad Ali imported only knowledge that would serve his defined purposes, Egyptians currently import the content of Western scientific and technical knowledge in a strategic manner. The Islamization of knowledge by scholars from the Golden Age has not been replicated as modern Muslims encounter new sources of knowledge. Unfortunately, the failure to Islamize knowledge through scholarly debates means that knowledge has never been authenticated and internalized. A liberal arts education with its emphasis on development of the individual is similarly viewed with suspicion as something that could be destructive of Islamic community. An Islamic liberal arts education would likely encounter less resistance from society and would encourage scholarly debate conducive to the Islamization of knowledge.

While the reintroduction of an Islamic liberal arts education could possibly bridge the structural hole between society and the intellectual elite, it could also deepen the growing chasm between Egyptian Muslims and Egyptian Coptic Christians. The new professor who expressed that the AUC was out of harmony would likely be quick to question just what an Islamic liberal arts education would mean. This professor was the only one to make a point out of letting me know her religion—Coptic Christian. The growing Islamization of society was of deep concern to her as she felt it promoted a black and white type of thinking and, not infrequently, was targeting Copts as other. This is a point

that must be taken very seriously. Does Egyptian education, as it currently stands, promote a national identity as Nasser had wished? A senior professor I interviewed felt that the university played an important role in the development of a common national experience and identity. Would a reintroduction of an Islamic liberal arts education further the bifurcation between Muslims and Copts? Would it promote black and white thinking and destroy secularism? Would it be even worse than the current authoritarian regime for the acquisition, dissemination, and production of knowledge?

In terms of social capital an Islamic liberal arts education could bridge some structural holes while deepening others. What kind of role it plays depends upon the content as well as the method of teaching. Currently critical thinking about Islam is not welcomed by either state or society. As critical thinking is not much welcomed at all, it is hardly surprising that the dominant religion should be perceived as beyond question. However, like many Muslims, Egyptians have tended to sacralize human interpretation without realizing it. An Islamic liberal arts education could ameliorate this tendency and, perhaps, allow for a better and more solid bridge between Muslims and Christians. It might also promote a broader questioning of what secularism is and what it might mean in a predominantly Muslim state.

In terms of a knowledge society, the emphasis on building an individual able to understand, extrapolate and problem solve through the development of rational faculties found within an Islamic liberal arts education would serve to return dynamic creativity to the Arab world. This is particularly so if some means of institutionalizing the spontaneous *halaqa* of the Golden Age could also be found. In order to accomplish this sort of change, resources must be invested in education. Education should have a higher

priority than security services if Egypt is to flourish politically and economically. State investment choices have a strong impact. Private universities could, as one senior professor argued, change the learning dynamic and are probably currently the best hope for doing so. Nonetheless, the state plays a strong role as it is the state that decides if these universities will be allowed to operate at all and, if so, under what conditions or standards.

Another substantial problem that came up in nearly every interview was the lack of funding for libraries. There is a shortage of access to databases and to peer-reviewed journals at Cairo University. There is also a shortage of hard copy materials in the library. Recent Ph.D.s usually maintain some sort of subscription to the university in the West that granted them a Ph.D. However, the lack of funding impacts the ability of scholars at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science to acquire, produce, and disseminate knowledge.

The lack of funding hampers the ability of professors to stay up to date in their field. This, in turn, hampers their ability to acquire new knowledge. Dissemination is also impacted as professors cannot impart what they do not have to students. Moreover knowledge production is limited by the lack of databases for research purposes as well as the overall lack of peer-reviewed journals and hard copy materials. In order to become a knowledge society or even the more limited knowledge economy, the free flow of information is a necessity. Indeed, the availability of books, databases, peer-reviewed journals, and other sources of knowledge of information that have been translated into

Arabic might also provide a bridging mechanism between the Arab Middle East and the West[107] as well as improving access to knowledge within the Arab Middle East.

## Academic Freedom

One senior professor informed me, rather dramatically, that there was no academic freedom in Egypt. Another asserted that there was complete academic freedom—you just needed to be careful of how you said things. The evidence supports the former more than the latter.

The professor who asserted that academic freedom did obtain in Egypt illustrated his point by quoting Taha Hussein's assertion that Egypt was European Mediterranean and that freedom and liberty were important values in the European Mediterranean tradition. Cairo University, he argued, had a tradition of academic freedom and this is true. Taha Hussein's case demonstrates this professor's assertion that constraints came from society rather than the university. Taha Hussein, of course, was at the center of one of the most well-known debates over Arabic literature in the twentieth century. The Islamic university of Al-Azhar condemned Hussein's book *On Pre-Islamic Poetry* as blasphemy. Despite becoming a part of intense parliamentary debate, Hussein received support from the rector of his university. As this professor noted, this is hardly a case of the state limiting academic freedom.

However this was also a pre-Nasserist state that, however complicit with British interests, ruled through a monarch and a parliament. It has been classified as a

[107] The same could be said of knowledge produced in the Middle East and disseminated in the West. Some translating agencies exist but the best of these are rather obscure and many scholarly works produced in Arabic go untranslated into English. As much more work is already in English or translated into English from around the world, it is quite critical to address the failures to translate from English into Arabic as too much of the world's production of knowledge is entirely inaccessible to Arabic speakers.

democracy but suffered from the distortions of colonialism. Nonetheless, Cairo University functioned as a private institution within a putative democracy at the time of the accusation leveled against Taha Hussein for blasphemy. There is also a critical difference between a private university with the stated mission of providing a liberal arts education and a national university that has been subordinated to the interests of an authoritarian developmental state.

However, the commitment of Cairo University to finding a balance between the secular and the religious as well as between imported and local knowledge was severely strained by Nasser's cooptation for political purposes.

> Nasser, who took power in 1954, sought to shape higher education to serve his political purposes. He wanted academia to articulate an ideology for his brand of Arab nationalism and tried to enlist its support by controlling the campuses. "[F]freedom of thought, speech, and action was squelched. Police informers saturated the campus, and professors never knew the exact limits of permissible debate," Reid writes. One academic described the blow as a watershed in university history. "Academic freedom in Egypt ended in 1954 when the soldiers threw out the liberal professors and decided to turn Egyptian universities into a government bureau," said poet and former professor Ahmad Taha. Nasser also emphasized technical learning rather than "knowledge for knowledge's sake," Cairo University's original mandate. As a result, the Faculties of Engineering and Medicine replaced those of Law and Arts as the most prestigious and popular. While such disciplines are important fields of study, the head of state's influence over curriculum represented a loss of university autonomy. The universities' institutional problems started in this era, too. The numbers of students increased dramatically after Nasser eliminated tuition, but the quality of education declined because the faculty and facilities were not expanded at the same time.[108]

The professor who claimed complete academic freedom considered the real problem to be a lack of political freedom coupled with some societal constraints. However, the Hussein case, while illustrative of what the university could be, conceals more than it reveals here. Nasser did revamp the educational system quite significantly and used it to promote a national ideology. While it is usually considered a part of the task of the

[108] Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between the 'Red Lines'": 24.

educational system to inculcate a national identity, this is generally considered the task of primary and secondary schools in the West. The university has the responsibility of building a well-rounded individual through a liberal arts education. A liberal arts education has some connection with the knowledge society touted by *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* wherein a spirit of critical inquiry should prevail through the free dissemination, acquisition, and production of knowledge.

A single interview subject mentioned that security approval was a prerequisite to T.A. appointment. The procedure of security approval was only a problem for students who were politically active as undergraduates. Further my informant was unaware of any appointment where security intervention had taken place. However, the threat of security intervention was pervasive and promoted self-censorship. In addition to cumulative achievement as a prerequisite to advancement in academia there must also be a very strong awareness of the opportunity costs of political activism. In other words, not only must a student be a high achiever, he or she must also be equally adept at self-censorship in order to pursue an academic career. Self-censorship particularly obtains with regard to the red lines outlined in Chapter 1 and detailed by Human Rights Watch. No written prohibition exists or existed with regard to criticism of Mubarak and his family, free discussion of the Islamic religion and what it means in state and society, or on how Israel is discussed but unwritten rules exist called red lines that greatly inhibit what can be said and how it can be said. All academics self-censor and the most junior of them are the most cautious as they have the least familiarity with the precise boundaries of the unwritten rules and the most to lose in terms of opportunity costs.

Although it was senior professors who emphasized the topic of academic freedom, they were rather less anxious about security intervention. The pervasive fear was much more strongly felt by graduate students who likely had less familiarity with Egypt's omnipresent red lines. Crossing the wrong line at the wrong time and censure from a security institution could destroy one's future. In a society where jobs are scarce and opportunities few, this is a substantial threat. Hence, the connection between theory and practical politics is often left unclear as T.A.s fear that using the wrong example might well result in security institution intervention. While many T.A.s do their best to explicate such connections, a confused undergraduate is more tolerable than a sacrificed future.

It is likely that the security officer who is on each Faculty stimulates greater fear on the part of undergraduates and junior graduate students. Junior scholars are advised to avoid collaboration with the security officer as it undermines academic freedom. However, it could be argued that the very presence of a security officer on each Faculty undermines academic freedom of any sort. This is, at least in part, what the 2005 Human Rights Watch Report on academic freedom in Egypt means by pervasive security with little visibility. The threat alone is enough to create an academic culture of self-censorship rather than one of academic freedom.

Another area of concern for academic freedom is political appointment of university rectors and the subsequent appointment of deans by university rectors. While not all deans come from the ruling NDP, most do and one senior professor asserted that due to his refusal to join the NDP, he would never be a dean. A graduate student reinforced this concern by explaining that although joining the NDP might be a way to bridge the state-

society gap it was not looked upon as something one did to better elite-mass relations but something one did for personal gain. Joining the party thus increased distrust from fellow academics as well as from the broader society.

My interviews tended to echo the findings of the much broader survey put together by Human Rights Watch in 2005. Their report, titled "Reading between the 'Redlines'," found three main instruments of government repression. These tools include police presence, political appointment of university rectors, and deans, as well as a series of laws and regulations designed to maintain state supervision over the universities. The violation to university autonomy, an essential component to academic freedom, is fairly clear. My own interviews and experiences at the gates of Cairo University reiterate and reinforce the problems concerning the ubiquitous police presence on campus and the climate of fear that it generates. The University Law of 1979 is also a serious obstacle to academic freedom as it gives deans the power to approve student clubs and student union nominees. Also noteworthy is Law No. 20/1936 that requires all imported printed materials to pass through a censor. All imported printed materials, of course, include textbooks and other material chosen for courses. Universities have also felt the effects of Egypt's notoriously lengthy resort to Emergency Law.

## Implications for Knowledge

Lack of funding for education is part of the knowledge deficit problem acknowledged by the 2003 Arab Human Development Report. At the primary and secondary levels students in overcrowded classrooms are encouraged to consume information strategically. Strategic knowledge acquisition is promoted both by the need to pay for tutoring aimed at helping students gain good scores on exams. The exams, themselves, also promote a

limited and strategic vision of knowledge consumption as good scores are needed to advance to another and better level of study. In a state mired by a lack of employment opportunities, these exams have an exaggerated effect on one's future opportunities and life prospects—particularly in the absence of personal connections. While exams are likely meant to eliminate the effects of patronage, they have failed to do away with the need for personal connections to enhance job opportunities and further limited chances for students unable to pay for the tutoring needed to do well on exams in a poor state that underfunds education.

In addition to a failure to adequately fund education, the state is further implicated in the knowledge deficit through its use of the security apparatus to monitor the university. The linkage between the ruling NDP and academic appointments limits university autonomy and, thus, enhances the knowledge deficit. It further inhibits trust.
The security apparatus maintains a presence on campus that also undermines 'knowledge for knowledge sake' as it produces a climate of fear and inhibits what can be discussed in the classroom. It also contains a chilling effect on student activism.

Bellini's factors of robust authoritarianism are also found here in the form of fiscal health and the coercive capacity of the security apparatus. Poor fiscal health in the form of underfunding the university coupled with more robust funding for coercive functions such as maintaining a monitoring presence of the security apparatus on campus acts to further the depoliticization of the university as a whole. It is quite similar to Salwa Ismail's observation in *Bulaq* that 'the state is everywhere, yet nowhere.'[109] In addition to providing an obstacle to the free acquisition, dissemination, and production of

[109]Ismail, *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters.*

knowledge, starvation of funds and the presence of the security apparatus have a chilling effect in terms of popular mobilization on campus.

In the pages that follow I will discuss how information obtained in my interviews concerning funding and freedom at the university relates to the three parameters of the knowledge society as outlined by the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*—knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production.

Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge acquisition is severely impacted by short funds and the presence of the security apparatus on campus. Funding issues limit both access to university study and are primarily responsible for a decrease in the quality of education offered.

The costs of access to the university begin almost as soon as a child enters school. Although exams modeled on the French educational system might have seemed a means of introducing standardized instruction and expectations in a highly socially stratified country, funding failures severely undercut a system that was imposed in order to increase fairness and reduce if not eliminate the prominent bifurcations exhibited within Egypt. In order for children, across economic classes, to get the same education public schools need to have enough funding to educate each child. Current underfunding has contributed to overcrowded classrooms and underpaid teachers who cannot hope to fairly educate all children. Moreover, in order for teachers to make a survival wage, they must supplement their income. A solution has been found in giving tutorials to smaller groups of students that will enhance their ability to do well on exams. Knowledge acquisition is thus limited in two ways. First parents must find the money to pay for tutoring and

second, due to the funding outlay, students and their parents are encouraged to view the consumption of knowledge as a strategic commodity.

All of these factors impact university studies. By the time Egyptian students qualify into particular Faculties, they have already internalized a method of education based upon rote memorization to pass exams. Knowledge acquisition is geared towards passing an exam in order to advance to the next level, thus enhancing prestige as well as promoting opportunities for gainful employment. For those unable to get good exam scores, private universities have emerged but are considered of low quality and degrees are of low value. The exception to the rule of poor quality private universities is the American University of Cairo. Students that can afford to go to the AUC and have the necessary English language skills are far more likely to acquire the knowledge necessary to fully participate in a competitive world knowledge economy. Arguably, however, as the children of Egypt's elite, students at AUC were already products of a different system from the one attended by middle class and poor students.

Funding solutions offered by the professors I interviewed generally involved more society-centric solutions than the state appeared to prefer. The *awqaf* could, in particular, produce scholarships as well as endow chairs. Anti-*waqf* laws were aimed at undermining the power of the *ulema* as well as the power of Islam and traditional sources of authority as well as traditional means of civic participation. Modeled on Kemalism, Nasser's placement of religious endowments under the control of the state was meant, as in Turkey, to use the power of the state to drag a reluctant society into modernity. However, as Vali Nasr argues in *Forces of Fortune*, Kemalism has become a problem and inhibiting force in the region. Kemalism, which strongly resembles Nasserism,

views society as part of the problem and is, thus, reluctant to view any solution that uses society as any kind of solution at all.[110]

National universities are also poorly funded. The problems that accompany a student into higher education will not be resolved at the university. Paid tutorials are gaining popularity at the university as a means to increase income. Too, teaching towards exams allows graduate student T.A.s as well as professors an opportunity to avoid any type of controversy that may attract the attention of the state security offices located in every Faculty. Although the strongest impact on knowledge is to dissemination and production, the chilling effects of security upon student acquisition of knowledge should not be underestimated.

Knowledge Dissemination

Knowledge dissemination is also harmed both by lack of funding and security intrusions by the state. First is simply the availability of funds for libraries. This problem was mentioned in nearly every interview I conducted as it inhibits knowledge dissemination and production as well as acquisition. Professors cannot acquire up to date knowledge in order to disseminate it without databases, subscriptions to journals, as well as books. The problems related to translation failures that I previously mention are also pertinent here. The low rate of translation often has students trying to learn from materials in the English language. Most students are not proficient enough with English to strongly benefit from materials written in the English language. Cairo University's language of instruction is Arabic and class materials should be in Arabic. All too often,

[110]Vali Nasr. *Forces of Fortune: The Rise of the New Muslim Middle Class* (New York: Free Press, 2009).

though, the most recent information has not been translated and students must struggle to acquire information through a foreign language.

Further inhibiting the free flow of information are laws designed to accomplish precisely that—inhibiting the free flow of information. The previously cited Law No. 20/1936 is a case in point. All imported printed material often includes textbooks and other course materials and, thus, the task of the university to disseminate information is at the mercy of a censor. National universities, such as Cairo University, face less of a problem than the American University of Cairo, which imports much of its course material. However, in order to be safely within the law, the national universities adhere to a strictly routinized and rote-based curriculum. My interview subjects who worked as T.A.s were highly conscious of this problem. Many asserted that a subject such as political science required critical thinking and, yet, they felt constrained by student expectations that the T.A.'s job was solely to help them pass exams based on rote memorization and the state security apparatus's system of surveillance. Hence, knowledge dissemination is constrained by the state in two ways. Fear of security interference limits what can be taught and the exam process limits how it can be taught.

Knowledge Production

In Chapter 1 I discussed the problems caused by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics or CAPMAS at some length. CAPMAS regulates statistical research. The process for obtaining permits is arduous enough to inhibit research. Many choose shallower studies so as to avoid the permit process. The control here exerted by an authoritarian state, fearful of the production of knowledge, stifles overall knowledge production and hinders knowledge production. CAPMAS serves a dual function. First it

exerts surveillance over researchers and knowledge production. Second it ensures that the *sha'abi*'s suspicion of research as a means of exerting surveillance over them has some foundation in fact. Any bridge that might serve to link the *sha'abi* and the knowledge producing academic elite is rendered tenuous by the use of an agency that should be used to protect people from unethical research as a surveillance mechanism.

Further inhibiting knowledge production is the idea transmitted that knowledge should be of immediate use to Egyptians. One of the graduate students I interviewed asserted that one professor argued to his class that research that was not of immediate use to the state might well be a waste of time. This particular student was from an academic family and did not quite agree. He was of the opinion that all knowledge was useful even if that usefulness was not immediately practically relevant. The dissemination of the attitude that research ought to be in service to the state is a perspective that is common in developmental states. The idea, of course, is that a postcolonial state, such as Egypt, needs to catch up and cannot waste time with extraneous knowledge. Unfortunately this attitude has a deleterious effect on critical inquiry and appears to hamper the very knowledge production needed in a postcolonial developmental state. The use of ideological guidelines, meant to build national unity, restrains many from asking and following certain lines of questioning that could result in significant knowledge breakthroughs. In other words, the belief inculcated by a Nasser's nationalism that all knowledge should serve state development has negatively impacted Cairo University's original mission of 'knowledge for knowledge sake' in more ways than one.

## Conclusion

Academic freedom and funding were thought to be two of the most important issues in higher education by senior professors. Suggestions for the improvement of funding for higher education tended to involve greater societal participation. Suggestions from professors included reactivation of the Islamic *waqf* system and requirement of minimal tuition from middle class students.

While these suggestions would seem to reinforce problems exacerbated by Sadat's *infitah* policies of educational opportunities bifurcated according to class, this was nowhere the intent of the professors who suggested it. They were most concerned with reviving a sagging higher educational system that desperately needed more funding to acquire instructional material as well as improve student learning opportunities. Free education is, in principle, desirable. However, in a poor state, such as Egypt, it has overburdened the system and produced an education that is not globally competitive for graduates. Although no one explicitly made the point that societal involvement in higher education could produce some changes in the strategic consumption of knowledge, the point must be considered here. While endowments for scholarships or academic chairs usually contain some agenda from the donor, this is not, altogether, a negative. Rather than the state imposing its agenda, there could be competing agendas that would increase debate and intellectual production. Dissemination and acquisition would be furthered by more funds.

State funding is necessary but when funding comes in its entirety from the state, a single agenda can be imposed and is imposed in Egypt. Nasserism, like the Kemalism it emulates, perceives society as a backwards force that must be overcome in order to

achieve modernity. Social capital in its positive and civic sense cannot be fostered within this type of system as the state seeks to disseminate a singular vision of a modern state that will reeducate the people into proper citizenship. This allows and, indeed, reinforces structures of social capital that allow the penetration of the state's coercive apparatus into all arenas within a knowledge society and the people remain too suspicious for any kind of bridge or linking mechanism to occur between societal sectors and academic elites. Scholars are constrained to produce knowledge that serves the state. The system is top down and enforced from above. Funding scarcity and state security intrusions ensure that a top down approach is enforced. Both of these features are also found in Bellin's delineation of factors that maintain robust authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East.

This problem of a state that seeks to implement an agenda on its society while maintaining elite privilege will be further examined in a chapter on the Egyptian revolution of 2011. Although revolution is something of a misnomer here, that is the popular title for the peaceful uprising of the Egyptian people that removed Hosni Mubarak. Control and order still prevail over inquiry in the Arab states and that shows in the context of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science wherein scholars are not to 'seek knowledge for knowledge sake' but to serve the state. The modern state has done little to promote knowledge acquisition for the sake of knowledge and certainly does not promote critical thought. Regime maintenance strategies increase access costs for knowledge diffusion. Regime reliance on coercion fragments societal actors and increases access costs as societal groups fear bridging the gaps amongst groups.

The second factor that inhibits the development of a knowledge society is associated with the service of knowledge to the state. As a late developer, there are solid reasons for

the political authorities to make resources available to that which serves the state. The type of political and social patronage that the authors of the *Human Development Report* laud depend on a desire to have the most knowledgeable and learned around for the benefits that such research might accrue. The modern Egyptian state has yet to be convinced that pouring scarce resources into uncontrolled knowledge centers will benefit the regime and it probably will not benefit the ruling regime. It would benefit Egyptian society but, thus far, that is of less interest to the ruling regime than maintaining itself in power.

# CHAPTER 5

# THE AUTHORITARIAN STATE AND SCHOLARS

## Introduction

In patron-client associations or clientelism and distributive politics in more complex societies, holes or chasms are not spanned by coherent and rationalized structures or do not mesh well with society and, hence, may lack transparency. It is also possible to have a well-rationalized and codified structure or bridge that is not transparent to society or has patronage style appointments that enhance a leader's power as Ayubi argues. It is semi-autonomous but not embedded in Peter Evans' terms of embedded within society. In other words, the system is well enough institutionalized to be considered mostly autonomous but is marred by patronage style political appointments that depend upon a leader's whim. Evans' understanding of embeddedness had to do with networks between bureaucrats and businessmen wherein knowledge could be exchanged informally while autonomy meant that the bureaucracy was well enough institutionalized to act independently of the blandishments of particular businessmen or of the whims of particular political leaders. This produces spots of distrust in procedure and disruptions in bridges between networks.

In terms of the development of a knowledge society, mechanisms that are not assimilated or trusted by users do not bridge holes. This means that knowledge has no conduit for exchange. Despite rationalization and proceduralization, the hole or chasm cannot be crossed by individuals or collectivities as the bridge cannot be trusted. Knowledge acquisition and dissemination is hobbled by the lack of transparency or legitimacy of the transporting mechanisms.

The Faculty of Economics and Political Science is known for its quality and adherence to rationalized procedures. Thus my questions were designed to elicit some understanding of how social capital might function as a bridging device or be confounded by lack of clear proceduralization. Analysis of the answers provided by my interview subjects suggested that bridging social capital, that is international networks, provided intellectual elites with more access to knowledge acquisition and production than did local sources that might come under state constraints regarding funding or freedom of inquiry.

## Bureaucracy: Rationalization and Transparency

Feddarke et al. assert that rationalization abstracts rules and norms into codified procedures that promote the replacement of informal associations with formal administrative mechanisms and structures. They argue that rationalization encourages flexibility as individual leadership lessens in importance.

The Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Cairo University is very well rationalized. Promotion into graduate school within the faculty is based upon merit. Grades, exams and class standing determine a student's appointment to T.A. status. The

top two or three in a graduating class are promoted and hired as T.A.s. With very high unemployment among Egypt's youth it is viewed as a good opportunity by many but not all as many will refuse the appointment because they have the personal connections outside the department to make money while others are just not interested. As testing and grades determine promotion and appointment to T.A. status, a much higher number of women are T.A.s than one might expect. Nonetheless, a number of women turn it down or drop out due to what one informant perceived as a lack of interest but other reasons cannot be discounted.

Procedures also exist for exceptional cases to reapply for a T.A. position and, hence, admission to graduate school. These are decided upon a case by case basis in which a student who has been denied a TA position may ask for a review of his or her case. For example, if people from a later class year are hired with lesser grades a student may ask for a review of his or her case and gain appointment based on higher merit from a previous class year. Other unusual appointments exist but, again, have a strong merit component. While it is not common to gain appointment at an IGO and then decide one's real calling is scholarship, it has and does occur. In the few cases where it occurs, the individual obtained degrees at a foreign and, usually, Western university and returned to be nominated for a position. Unusual channels can raise suspicions in the highly rationalized environment of the Faculty of Political Science and Economics. This is particularly so due to the larger Egyptian environment wherein appointment to posts and promotions is frequently the result of political connections.

Indeed, everyone I spoke with was very proud of their Faculty's excellent adherence to rationalized procedures as that adherence was rather unusual among Faculties at Cairo

University and very unique in Egypt wherein corruption and nepotism run rampant. There has been no scandal associated with the Faculty in decades and the Faculty, graduate students and professors are quite proud of that. One young woman suggested that I might be studying the wrong Faculty as it was so unusual in this regard.

The only possible irregularity in the Faculty's highly rationalized system of recruitment of graduate students came from outside the Faculty. As discussed in the last chapter, one interview subject mentioned that the approval of security institutions was required before appointment to T.A. That particular procedure was only a hindrance for those who were politically active and as self-censorship is the norm, direct intervention from security institutions does not occur. However the perception of omnipresent threat of intervention meant that discussion occurred in generalized and abstract terms regarding sensitive issues involving political corruption, succession and anything else that might be perceived as sensitive in nature to the ruling regime. While my informant was not aware of any intervention by security in the appointment or lack thereof to a graduate student, the informant did perceive the threat as promoting self-censorship based upon individual perception of what could or could not be said without losing future opportunities.

Although the role of security institutions was never mentioned again, it seems reasonable to assume that self-censorship might very well be habitual among junior and senior scholars at the Faculty. Nonetheless appointments are highly rationalized and bureaucratic procedures for appointments routinely followed. An M.A. degree must be obtained within five years of appointment to graduate student/TA status. Once an M.A. is obtained, one achieves assistant lecturer status. A governmental scholarship may be

granted to gain a Ph.D. abroad. This all begins with achievement at the undergraduate level as students are ranked by grades over the course of their four years of study. Once a Ph.D. is obtained, an individual can become an assistant professor at the Faculty. There is a five-year minimum at this level before an assistant professor can submit academic production for promotion. Rules and regulations regarding publications are very specific and a committee judges the body of work with an emphasis placed upon prestige of publication. This process is replicated for appointment to full professor. Tenure begins with appointment to assistant professor. This very systematic and well-proceduralized system does not take student evaluations into account though.

Teaching ability may be completely discounted in this system. The system of promotion followed depends upon publication and western publications carry more prestige. Student evaluations are new to Cairo University and are used give a professor more information about what students need as well as how to improve teaching. However, large class sizes (often consisting of hundreds of students at the undergraduate level) hamper the ability of professors to create greater convergence between professor expectations and student expectations. T.A.s coordinate with a professor to simplify material for their own sections of a large class. While one professor expressed that this should be a coordinated and mutual process so as to better coordinate expectations and avoid rote learning, some T.A.s may be subverting that goal somewhat as a T.A. may very well teach solely towards exams thus replicating student expectations of memorization for exams over professor expectations of analysis and thought. T.A.s are junior scholars and their futures are more heavily impacted by fears of security intervention. Self-censorship likely plays a role in the decision to teach more towards

exams than critical thinking as does the relative ease of teaching towards what students are used to doing and expect over trying to inculcate a different approach to learning. Feddarke et al. argue that the rationalization of administrative features will promote the ability of insiders and outsiders to interact in a productive manner. Indeed, individuals from this Faculty perform exceedingly well at Western institutions. However, within Egypt, they appear an isolated academic community that insists upon Weberian bureaucratic methods while other Egyptian institutions act with different, less proceduralized mechanisms that may promote privilege over merit or, as Ayubi notes, prize power over efficiency. The Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Cairo University is a prestigious one and deservedly so. It regularly sends graduate students to the U.S. and Europe who are well-deserving, good scholars; however, the spirit of critical inquiry and love of knowledge do not appear to make many inroads into Egyptian society. These scholars can bridge the gap between themselves and the international community but are continually frustrated within their own state and society.

Support for Research and Academic Pursuits

Complaints about lack of funding and enough monetary support to fully engage in the academic life appear universal among graduate students. Graduate students in the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Cairo University were no exception in this regard. All graduate students at the Faculty felt that the emotional and academic support from professors was quite strong but had mixed opinions concerning funding. A first-year student said the procedures to obtain funding seemed opaque while a senior graduate student said that it is not so much opaque as just very difficult to gain research funding and fellowships due to a lack of resources.

Much of this was echoed by junior professors. While leaves of absence can be taken, these are not sabbaticals. A professor would have to find another source of income in order to take advantage of a leave for pure research. Too, professors said there was no funding from the university or government for paper submissions and conference participation. In order to obtain monies for research and academic conferences, professors applied to private think tanks, USAID, and other international academic funding sources. Salaries are also low. Several of the junior professors I interviewed worked at three or more institutions.

Only one of the professors I interviewed felt that research monies were adequate and did not express dissatisfaction with salary. While this was not the only woman I interviewed, she was the only person I interviewed to make a point out of explaining how cultural gender expectations made the academic life a good one for women.

More women than men make it into graduate school. This is partially due to an adherence to cumulative grades and class standing in making the appointment and the lower likelihood of women refusing the appointment due to a better opportunity elsewhere. Nonetheless, females are more prone than males to drop out of graduate school. However there was nothing to suggest that they ran into particular gender discrimination within the Faculty and rather more evidence to suggest that the pressure may come from family and neighborhood community. This was certainly true in one of the families I lived with where one young woman was pursuing a Master's degree at another Faculty. She was considered rather odd and out of step for not being much interested in marriage. The older she got, the more vocal her immediate and extended family about marriage. The teasing was gentle but a little relentless. I would assume that

female graduate students at the Faculty for Political Science and Economics came under the same kinds of family and communal pressure.

For those women who live in more understanding or academically oriented environments or those just able to withstand the pressure from family and friends, the academic life offers advantages and opportunities that women might, otherwise, not have. One informant explained that, for example, "a diplomat is sent out and the spouse is a dependent so cultural values inhibit diplomacy as a career path for women and women must make sacrifices but within academia female scholars can make a balance between home and career."

Cultural norms may render the academic path both more difficult for women to travel and more beneficial once a certain level of achievement is gained. While women were more likely to be appointed as a T.A., thus entering graduate school, they were also more likely to drop out than men. The very strictly merit-based system of class ranking does, at least initially, greatly reduce gender inequalities. What it cannot do is eliminate cultural norms surrounding expectations of women and men. However, if a woman either perseveres through the marriage expectation or has a supportive family, she does not face the same financial obligations that men face. Male associate professors were usually working at other institutions in order to support the lifestyle expected of a university professor while the few females I interviewed (only one-third of the sample) were more likely to express dissatisfaction with the emphasis placed upon money and prestige by colleagues. Men were also more likely to complain of the low salaries and difficulty in gaining funds for research as well as the inability of the university to give sabbaticals to pursue research. Egyptian gender norms offer women a greater degree of

financial freedom. However, this is no female utopia despite the very high number of female graduate students as the number of female professors is low.

Generally speaking the men are correct that the university generally as well as the Faculty more specifically is underfunded. There are not enough fellowships or enough monies for research. Further many expressed particular disappointment with the university library. Periodicals are very limited and newer books unavailable. This is not just a problem for research but for teaching. I walked away with a very strong impression that one of the best aids to this university would either be money for libraries to have better access to electronic subscriptions of periodicals and, perhaps, a subscription to ebrary or for Western institutions to consider partnering with universities in developing countries to reduce access costs to written knowledge. In any case, *The 200 3Arab Human Development Report's* emphasis upon translation of knowledge and accessibility are not misplaced.

Relations with the Community

Another common research complaint concerned research into local communities. The ordinary person was considered as suspicious of elites by the academics I interviewed and, therefore, less than forthcoming. One academic noted that as ordinary people do not see the benefit of research, they see little use in participating in any research studies. The problem is at its worst with public officials but it permeates community-intellectual relations as well. A researcher would need to spend significant time building a relationship with community informants in order to gain their trust and respect.

A senior graduate student asserted that collaboration with community activists and the private sector had declined over the past twenty or so years. However my informant

hastened to add that in the past few years the university has begun to organize awareness campaigns such as promoting better understanding of good health in marginalized communities. These programs were added to the university administrative structure and run by the University VicePresident. Another informant noted that *qawwafil* (missionaries) would go out to communities surrounding the university during summer months and perform services. Medical students, for example, might give free checkups while the group supervised by this professor pursued environmental care awareness and creating symposiums advising ordinary people of the dangers of pollution, smoking, and other environmental issues.

A few professors were relatively active with community organizations although at least one refused to discuss what community associations he was working with so it is possible that some that said they were not involved in any simply did not want to make their ties to certain community associations known. Such discretion would imply involvement with a group that could be perceived as too political by the state wherein too political usually implies Islamist. Intriguingly these professors were the most likely to express some hope of following a development trajectory more similar to that of Turkey that involved reform and to strongly fear the further economic maldevelopment that could occur if Egypt followed a more Iranian style revolution trajectory. Most of those who did not mind specifying what community service they were affiliated with were affiliated with official university programs or orphans and services to the poor.

A gender difference also emerged with regard to activity with community association. While most women in the sample just said it was a nice idea but they did not have time to participate in such associations, one revealed a bit more. She said that her personal life

and academic life were completely separated. To a certain extent this is also likely a result of differing gender expectations in the home. The freedom women gain by not being the primary financial support for the family is offset by greater expectations for women with regard to home and child care. Indeed, this particular subject and I found ourselves on a bit of a tangent with regard to the differences in our respective cultures concerning familial support and freedom of action. Freedom of action is much greater within the U.S, but familial support can be lacking. My informant, who studied the poor in Egypt quite intensively, noted that an Egyptian woman would never find herself and her children out on the streets—a family member would always step in. However, the price of that support is greater family control over a woman's decisions and life. While we had a great deal of fun playing with this idea, it does go some ways towards explaining why Egyptian women might not agitate for their freedom of action as much as Western women think they should. Family and kinship groups make up very basic survival networks. The social capital of the Egyptian patriarchal family makes up a type of very dense network that enhances survival.

A more broadly based question concerning the role of the university in the community elicited some very interesting responses. While all felt that universities and intellectuals had a great deal to offer society, responses were mixed as to effectiveness as well as community responsiveness. One scholar argued that the bifurcation between intellectuals and society is too great to be successfully bridged.

Most asserted, however, that the university should play a very strong role as it can contribute to development in various ways such as providing information, exerting influence on behalf of citizens, providing a link between state and society, as well as by

educating Egyptian youth and promoting Egypt's store of human capital. Organizing public debates sometimes ran into problems with security services though. Indeed it is difficult to ascertain how much of the gap or bifurcation between well-intentioned university intellectuals is due solely to the lack of education and apathy in society or due to a well-founded fear that such links might result in a little too much attention from security services.

Professor-student Relations

Most of my informants spoke of the ideal relationship they would like to have with undergraduates but were forced to concede that the reality of very large class sizes (150 is the average size of an undergraduate political science class at Cairo University) rendered this idea impossible. Professors preferred a more direct academic relationship with students and felt that the large average class size made it difficult to create much convergence between professor expectations and student expectations. They also expressed some frustration with the need to fully impose their own agenda. While professors always impose something of an agenda upon students as they know more, these professors were frustrated at the lack of a feedback. They all felt strongly that critical thinking was an important component of political science and that component suffered from the sheer impossibility of a professor establishing more one-on-one academic relationships with undergraduate students. As the rote memorization for testing is strongly inculcated into most students before they ever enter the university, professors are acutely aware of the need to build the critical thinking faculties of their undergraduate students. How can this struggle to redirect how students learn be accomplished with such huge average class sizes? One of the roles of a T.A. is to bridge this gap.

The appointment as a T.A. and entrance into graduate school are concurrent at Cairo University. Graduate students or T.A.s are generally expected to qualify students for exams. There are no university guidelines for T.A. duties at the Faculty and a T.A. works with professors to establish expectations and guidelines for a specific course. Generally, a professor might focus on the abstracts of theory while a T.A. focuses on practical application. For example, in a course on statistics the professor would lecture on the theory and abstracts of generalized problem solving while a T.A. would help them actually solve the problems in their course sections.

As I noted previously, some T.A.s may actually avoid practical examples. Graduate students seemed generally more anxious about security institutions. The most senior professors were completely unconcerned in interviews. I would posit that graduate students are more nervous due to fears for their future and less knowledge of what could be safely said. While one graduate student T.A. explained that security interventions never really happened, the fear was omnipresent. If anything, undergraduates are likely to be even more fearful. However, this fear—exaggerated or not—has the effect of avoiding what might be the most relevant and well-known practical examples. Self-censorship, then, would partially block those links between intellectuals and practitioners that Mokyr[111] found important to propelling England's industrial enlightenment into an industrial revolution. While students are not generally involved in the practical

[111] Joel Mokyr investigates the process whereby knowledge production leads to invention. While ideas and knowledge can be costly to generate, spillovers and externalities of knowledge production can lead to increased economic growth that sustains itself. Mokyr examines growth in knowledge bases combined with changing attitudes towards knowledge, its dissemination, and technologies. A marked shift occurred in the period between the Enlightenment and the Industrial Age. Mokyr call this period the Industrial Enlightenment. He writes, "Modern economic growth demonstrates that in some societies, people overcome the tendency of accepting that techniques work without worrying about why they did so." Joel Mokyr, *The Gifts of Athena: Historical Origins of the Knowledge Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 22-26, 26

applications of solutions for various problems, the perceived need to be somewhat less than concrete in what could be sensitive areas, render a connection between theories and practice even more opaque. While most T.A.s I spoke with did their best to bridge these gaps without sacrificing their own futures, at least one of my interview subjects taught specifically towards exams, thus avoiding the problem altogether.

As salaries are, of course, very low T.A.s said they need to feel a special sense of mission or passion for promoting knowledge acquisition among undergraduates. The most frequent metaphor used was that of family. Most asserted that they felt themselves to be like older brothers or sisters who are tasked with helping undergraduates learn. Some said they stay in touch with former students.

The use of the family metaphor is interesting as family is definitely about a dense network. Although the elder sibling metaphor implies an awareness of hierarchy, the framing of T.A.-undergraduate relationships as familial rather than formal suggests that T.A.s are trying to set up a particular relationship regarding obligation and expectation. Egypt is an extraordinarily patriarchal society. The family is demonstrative of traditional patriarchal relations wherein status is conferred by age almost as much by gender. As an older brother or sister a T.A. may feel more entitled to express certain expectations concerning undergraduate learning and studying behaviors. They appear well aware that framing their relationships with undergraduates in such a manner also produces obligations on their part. The expectation/obligation reciprocity demonstrated by the use of the family metaphor extends to emotional support as well as academic support. The use of a sibling metaphor in particular sets up a certain amount of authority without presenting it as the all-powerful paternal figure. It is a very interesting dynamic.

Graduate students also relied on the family metaphor to explain their relationships with their advisors or mentors.

Graduate students felt that good personal relations with professors were important because promotion was a committee decision and if relations were not good that could affect judgment. While strict guidelines and procedures are present with regard to promotion for graduate students and junior faculty, personal relations were perceived as important both for the evaluation of one's scholarly pursuits as well as to improve access to professors that usually work elsewhere and have little spare time. In the first case of evaluation, graduate students argued that good personal relations promoted understanding of their research interests and scholarly pursuits. In stark contrast to how much of Egypt functions, there was no indication that anyone believed that personal relations alone were enough for appointment or promotion. Instead they asserted that by maintaining good personal relations wherein their work and interests were known and valued, the second component of access to a professor for advising as well as for helpful information became both easier and more rewarding. For example, professors are more likely to pass on information concerning opportunities for graduate students to further their studies or research.

Junior professors also felt that good personal relations were important but did not stress them nearly as much as graduate students did. Promotion was very well proceduralized although the five-year minimum was somewhat inconsistent as sometimes the five-year minimum would take into account work at other universities and sometimes only Cairo University counted. Nonetheless merit and academic achievements were perceived as the main factors governing the granting of promotion and tenure. Personal

relations and/or political factors might only account for about one-fifth of the decision. Junior professors laid much less emphasis upon personal relations than did graduate students. Senior professors preferred to skip this question entirely in order to spend more time with questions they found more interesting.

Everyone I interviewed observed that written guidelines and proceduralization made appointment and promotion relatively transparent. It was the most powerless who felt a stronger need to emphasize personal relations as a necessary component. While even here emphasis was laid on the type of rational, proceduralized social capital highlighted by Feddarke et al., it is worthwhile to question whether some of the emphasis on family-type obligation reciprocity from graduate students had anything to do with framing relations within a familiar type of association wherein relations are not purely exploitative but hierarchy does exist.

## Social Capital and the Implications for Knowledge

While Putnam emphasizes the lack of trust and cooperation inherent in unequal power relationships, this did not appear a significant problem within the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Cairo University. Everyone I spoke with at the Faculty emphasized the hierarchical nature of bureaucratic proceduralization within the Faculty but declined to describe personal relations as strongly hierarchical. The most often used metaphor from graduate students was that of family. The family is a dense network with hierarchical undertones—particularly within the patriarchal culture of Egypt. However, graduate students chose a sibling metaphor to describe their relations with professors and students. The sibling relationship is more equal than that of parent-child and this creates some interesting implications for reciprocity. The patron-client relations stressed by

Putnam fail to emerge in the elder-younger sibling metaphor. While graduate students did mention that stronger personal relations might mean more work, they declined to perceive this as exploitation on the part of their older sibling/professor. Instead, they portrayed the interaction as one wherein being first on the mind of professors brought both benefits in the way of greater information and more help with research as well as a possibly greater workload. While completely aware of the unequal status of graduate students and professors, graduate students did not perceive themselves as clients but as younger siblings who could expect professors to honor obligations to a younger sibling.

The family metaphor tended to be dropped with professors of all ranks. Hierarchy clearly mattered for promotional procedures but the perceived need to bind superiors into the obligations of a familial sort dropped. This difference is intriguing to note as it suggests that the longer one is in a highly codified and relatively transparent network, the more secure an individual might become with reliance upon formal mechanisms and trust in the system than with informal personal ties. In other words, the highly Weberian bureaucratic procedures used by the Faculty of Political Science and Economics seem to be assimilated over time. While the familial sibling metaphor equalizes reciprocity expectations within a familiar framework, it does betray a profound preoccupation with individual status within the relationship. No one, at any level, expressed that bad relations got you anywhere, but the preoccupation with someone else's individual status and pleasing a superior as a means of gaining access to information and knowledge disappeared. To a certain extent, graduate students everywhere are preoccupied with their relative powerlessness and lack of familiarity with the system and everywhere

graduate students expect faculty mentors to help them learn the ropes and Egyptian graduate students were no different from American graduate students in this regard.

However, whereas American graduate students would find the elder-younger sibling metaphor disconcerting, Egyptian graduate students used the metaphor to help them define their relationships and better understand their obligations and expectations. The family metaphor carries a strongly cultural component that is ameliorated over time as the procedures used to govern hierarchical relations were assimilated.

The role of security institutions at the Faculty is far more opaque. A security officer is on each Faculty and junior graduate students are advised to avoid collaboration as it undermines academic freedom. However, junior scholars noted that the presence of a security officer breeds rumor and self-censorship that also undermines academic freedom. Senior scholars (graduate students and professors) may advise care on an exam or intimate certain red lines exist but security intervention is not formalized. Senior professors were less likely to express security interventions as a serious problem. A scholar knows the red lines and adjusts language accordingly. In this instance though, the junior scholars may have the more realistic assessment that fear undermines academic freedom. Senior scholars may have simply learned to live with and around the situation. A Human Rights Watch Study of Academic Freedom in Egypt notes the following:

> Self-censorship influences class discussion as well as syllabi. Human Rights Watch found comparatively few examples of direct government interference in class discussion, but red lines limit the topics that can be addressed. “People are so used to it they censor themselves. They already know what’s acceptable,” the AUC theater professor said. Politics, for example, are largely off limits. “Most professors are quite cautious,” said Mustapha Kamel al-Sayyid, a political scientist who teaches at Cairo University and AUC. “Very few would dare to express views critical of the government in classes or public meetings. Those who do are a minority.” Even professors who said they felt free to discuss most subjects in the classroom avoided a topic as significant as the rule of Egypt’s

> president, Hosni Mubarak. "I haven't felt in the classroom much restrictions," said one sociologist. "I don't say Mubarak is a dictator, but I do say some states like Egypt have a lifetime president." A Cairo University professor who said there is "100 percent academic freedom in the classroom," later clarified, on condition of anonymity, "You can't attack Mubarak but anything else is OK." While not a specific response to direct repression, the self-imposed limits on class discussion show the power of red lines in Egyptian academia.[112]

Knowledge Acquisition and Dissemination

Egyptian primary and secondary education inculcates a certain learning culture into students. Students learn through memorizing material for exams. Rote memorization serves Egyptians well through primary and secondary schools. They memorize and do well on exams. Their performance on those exams determines the next phase of their education. Students take an exam as a part of graduating from secondary schools. Their scores determine what Faculty they can study with at the university. It is permissible to study with a faculty that is below your test ranking but not one that is above your test ranking. Undergraduates do not exactly choose which Faculty they will matriculate into although they are able to choose their majors from within the Faculty they have tested into. All in all they may be less than enthusiastic about the curriculum assigned to them at the Faculty as their choice of major is constrained by the limits of the system. Students may not choose a major from a Faculty that requires a higher test score than that received by the student. This system can lead to problems in knowledge acquisition on the part of undergraduate students in at least two ways.

First as rote memorization geared towards exams has served them well all their lives, they are highly resistant to changing the formula. One graduate student T.A. said that, for the most part, students are fully justified in learning for exams as grades translate into

[112] Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between the 'Red Lines'": 80

appointments or opportunities. Students perceive any information extraneous to exams as a waste of their time and only want the information that will get them a high grade and a good employment opportunity. By the time students reach the university, they have been thoroughly socialized into a system that rewards rote memorization for exams. Critical thinking and analysis are not perceived as necessary for success. Students expect their exam scores to get them good jobs. Hence, they memorize and discard information for exam purposes. Indeed, a senior T.A. informed me that as his classes had no midterm exam, very few attended at all and so he had the more enjoyable task of teaching to the most interested students which, apparently, were few in number. He said it was ideal. That lack of interest from the majority of students points out another flaw in the system. Students do not choose the Faculty they want to study at, their test scores determine that. While I was unable to interview undergraduates, the perspectives of graduate student T.A.s and professors concerning undergraduates offered some insight into how Egyptian society views knowledge acquisition.

Knowledge is a good that is acquired strategically. Students acquire the knowledge they need to do well on exams and then move on to the next acquisition-exam experience. Time and energy are deployed strategically and knowledge that is not immediately useful to exams is either ignored or discarded as completely extraneous. While this scenario does resemble the clientelism and distributional politics that permeates Egypt, it has a concealing mechanism in grades or exam scores. If jobs are distributed based on grades then employment seems merit-based rather than a matter of personal connections. In other words, human capital should dominate over social capital and likely that is the theory behind the system of using exams. However, parts of the bridge are missing

linkage between undergraduate and professor in the Egyptian exam-based system. The knowledge that the student seeks to acquire is not the knowledge the professor is trying to disseminate. There is an expectation gap. The professors I interviewed all spoke of a lack of convergence between professor and student expectations regarding knowledge.

The missing pieces of the bridge were filled in by graduate school or so those I interviewed suggested. Not only are graduate students the best test takers, they were interested in the subjects covered in the Faculty of Economics and Political. Likely that was particularly true for those who consented to an interview with me. As graduate student T.A.s share an office, I know that the majority were uninterested in allowing me to interview them. In any case graduate students showed much greater convergence with professor expectations concerning critical thinking and analysis. Although one T.A. asserted he taught to student expectations, the others spoke passionately about the need for critical thinking and analysis on the part of students at this particular Faculty. However, even the most idealistic felt that only 20 percent or less retained critical thinking and analytical abilities.

For themselves, graduate students I interviewed were quite engaged in critical thinking and analysis. They all felt a strong sense of social responsibility with regard to their research; however, they would stop to ask the question of whether only research that appeared to be of direct benefit to society should be a limitation. For example, one graduate student shared the perspective of one of his professors that Egyptian graduate students should only pursue research of direct national value. Egyptian scholars should not adopt a Westernized research agenda that might undermine the state and should only study the roles of other states in international relations as it affected Egypt. This

anecdote provided some insight into the reflective and analytical abilities of graduate students at this Faculty as this student analyzed this professor's viewpoint from three different perspectives. He concluded his analysis by arguing that blind spots are not useful and that gaps between state and researcher expectations are not only the responsibility of the researcher. His remarks also indicated certain problems within the knowledge production process that I will address more fully in the section concerning knowledge production.

In addition to their willingness to critically examine knowledge acquisition and dissemination, graduate students who were a part of this study strongly valued their own acquisition of knowledge. Those pursuing nontraditional topics that did not have a mentor available were quite willing to travel and study at foreign universities to find that knowledge. One of the female graduate students decided to go to a European University as she could not find anyone at Cairo University with either the knowledge or the interest in helping her with her Master's thesis. Her research focused on the internet and networking and she found little enthusiasm for the topic at the Faculty and, hence, could not find a mentor. She brought up an interesting constraint on knowledge acquisition that was somewhat surprising and may kink the linkages that can bring in new knowledge.

My informant asserted that while Egyptians face serious constraints on academic freedom due to state control, other constraints are to be found in Europe. While Europeans had greater academic freedom, it did not extend to non-Europeans. Opportunities for graduate study were based more on European perceptions of marginalization and national origin and that perception contributed to the more serious constraint found by my informant. She asserted, in no uncertain terms, that Europeans

had the perception and expectation that Middle Easterners should be more stupid and that expectation of stupidity creates pressures that limit academic freedom and, hence, knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and production. She changed the focus of her research from Egypt and the Arab world to Europe as she gained the strong impression that research of places outside Europe was not really appreciated or valued. While this also contains strong implications for knowledge production that I will discuss elsewhere, it also showed a kink in what might be considered a vertical linkage between a young scholar from the developing world and mentors in advanced industrialized countries. The knowledge my informant sought to acquire concerning the uses of the internet and networking in politics was gained but she felt patronized and unvalued. The mentors she sought out expected her to be more stupid and that expectation undermined the purpose of the knowledge she sought to acquire.

On the one hand, expectations from the Egyptian state concerning useful knowledge to acquire perpetuated a very instrumental view of knowledge acquisition—particularly from undergraduates. On the other, students wanted an atmosphere of free inquiry might be stymied by racism in the advanced industrialized countries that supposedly prize academic freedom for all. While those missing pieces of my bridge metaphor are filled in, there appear to be serious obstacles here. Other obstacles will be examined and these revisited in another chapter concerning academic freedom and funding issues for knowledge acquisition, production, and dissemination.

Knowledge Production

As I have discussed the issues brought up most frequently by professors concerning funding and academic freedom in a separate chapter, I will only address the knowledge

production issues brought up by the two graduate students previously discussed in the section on knowledge acquisition. It is posited that the industrial revolution did not occur in France first, not due to a lack of knowledge but due to the French emphasis on knowledge in service to the state or nation. Within Mokyr's framework of access costs to knowledge, this emphasis on instrumental knowledge driven by service to the state found in France may have limited the bridging mechanisms found in England wherein those with propositional knowledge interacted more freely and strongly with practitioners at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution.

Egypt is, if anything, even more centralized and state-oriented than France. Their educational system based on examinations is also heavily influenced by the French model and has all the same weakness and, perhaps, none of its virtues. With regard to knowledge production, the emphasis on what is most useful to the state or nation increases access costs as first the question of utility to state or nation must be examined. Further the emphasis on research in service to the state or nation can greatly constrain knowledge production and this will severely limit beneficial externalities of knowledge production. In particular, society is not included in the loop of knowledge production and the virtuous cycle of knowledge that begat the industrial revolution in England is missing a crucial input element. The state, while a participant in the knowledge loop through its unique ability to build institutions as well as fund them is not a good replacement for societal inputs.

Knowledge production can also find a quite different problem though and that problem is more societal and cultural in nature although it has an institutional mechanism as well. In their efforts to grant opportunities to marginalized scholars from developing

countries, European universities have found themselves duplicating some of the problems associated with affirmative action programs in the United States and elsewhere. There is a perception that a student from the Middle East is there based upon something other than merit and that perception promotes the belief that the Middle Eastern student is less able or, as my informant said, there was an expectation that she should be more stupid. The institutional reality that merit was not the sole criterion governing admission of non-European students coupled with a longstanding European tradition of the Muslim Middle Easterner as 'other' and inferior caused my informant to question the importance and utility of the focus of her research if not its topic. The impact of that for knowledge production is enormous. This student pursued information at another university in order to bring in the new knowledge that the bridging type of social is supposed to do and found that while she could gain access to that knowledge the access cost was the applicability of that knowledge to Egyptian society. Intriguingly, however, the European devaluation of Egypt may replicate the same knowledge production hole that is produced by the emphasis upon knowledge production in service to the state. Society is missing in both. The particular topic of the internet and networks is society-centric with its emphasis on societal networks found online and it was deemed of low value. Similarly in our first example, society is not perceived as an important or valuable part of the knowledge production loop. That low value on society as a part of knowledge production likely plays a role in the dissemination of knowledge problems.

Social capital of the bridging kind is a more civic and inclusive social capital. It can generate new opportunities and increase social interaction as well as lessen tensions

amongst societal groups. Putnam argues that it is this type of social capital that builds societal trust and generates efficiency as well as civic participation.

Egypt is a relatively homogenous society ethnically and religiously. They are estimated to have a Coptic Christian population of around 10 percent. Their relative homogeneity is thought by some analysts to have contributed to their relative stability. However, as examined previously, trust and efficiency are not products of that relative homogeneity. Indeed, the lack of trust amongst social classes and particularly a lack of trust in the state may well be a part of Egypt's development failures. Too, as Ayubi notes, bureaucracy in most of Egypt is about power and it contradicts efficiency. The Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University is something of an anomaly in this regard. They are squeezed from below as well as from above as society views the knowledge they disseminate and produce through strategic lenses while the state has various mechanisms to keep the university on a short leash and in check.

## Conclusion

The use of procedure to develop social capital, as outlined by Feddarke et al., provides a backdrop to examine the gradual assimilation of a Weberian type of bureaucracy by budding Egyptian scholars that replaces their view of the dense networks of familial expectation and obligation with a bureaucratized one. That assimilation facilitates the understanding of network relations undertaken in the next chapter wherein knowledge is brought in across holes or gaps rather than densely situated within a tightly knit network.

Too this chapter also explored the relatively high institutionalization of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science with the intrusions made by the state that undermine the

academic mission of knowledge acquisition, dissemination and production. Institutionalization was also a factor noted by Bellin that can act to inhibit democratic transitions. Relatively high institutionalization coupled with strategic bureaucratic appointments and the presence of security forces has acted to depoliticize the university. As noted in Chapter 3, the strategy of surveillance was deliberately deployed by Sadat and was refined under the Mubarak regime. Nasser's primary legacy, inhibiting knowledge, has come from the insistence that knowledge must serve the state.

# CHAPTER 6

# SCHOLARS AND NETWORKS

## Introduction

Networks most clearly bring together the concepts used within this dissertation to analyze the context within which Egyptian academics live and work. The idea of networks can be found within the literature surrounding social capital, understandings of knowledge networks, and Eva Bellin's identification of international support networks as one of the factors promoting robust authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East. Within this chapter I will examine the networking activity of the professors and graduate students I interviewed. An examination of networks provides us with some understanding of how and why the university has been depoliticized by the regime and knowledge is acquired, disseminated, and produced with more international support and recognition than national or regional recognition. The bridges that are meant to span holes are far more functional internationally due in part to the state's successful political containment of the university. That depoliticization stifles a knowledge society, as understood by the *2003 Arab Human Development Report*.

## Egyptian Professional Associations

By law all professors are required to be members of a university staff association. It is this association that provides staff with social and medical benefits and manages

scientific affairs. Professors were not very interested in elaborating upon this association. Despite the disinterest in elaborating upon this particular association, they sounded similar to professional syndicates found throughout Egypt. Egyptian professional syndicates play an important role in the provision of social, economic, and professional services. Syndicates have experienced increasing government interference, largely due to the successes of Muslim Brotherhood members in capturing leadership positions and control through elections during the 1990s. Some of these professional syndicates, controlled by the Brotherhood, became increasingly effective at providing services to members. Elections in Egypt have never been noted for freedom and fairness and government interference hobbled the professional syndicates severely over the decade. In the realm of higher education, government controls also increased.

One area of control includes political appointment of university rectors or presidents and deans at the university. Faculties at Egyptian universities were allowed to elect their own deans until 1994 when the government gave the power of appointment to university rectors. Deans are usually members of the NDP (National Democratic Party—Mubarak's ruling party). A senior professor I interviewed noted that while he was made department head due to his seniority, he was unlikely to become a dean as he refuses to join the NDP. He said that he found administrative work unpleasant anyway and could not find it in himself to be obedient and fall in line with conditions placed on deans.

Generally control is subtle but pervasive and professors did not comment much on intra-university relations. Similarly, while several noted that some efforts had been made to create linkages among professors at different state universities, these efforts encountered considerable difficulty due to time and money constraints. Additionally, a

junior professor noted that joint projects are rare as the promotional system does not encourage joint work. It is perceived as second class. My informant, who had recently obtained his PhD in the U.S. found it a little strange as the same professors would work on joint projects outside Cairo University in think tanks. It is impossible to discount fear of the state as a contributor to the lack of interest in joint work within Cairo University as well as with other national universities. While no professor mentioned state scrutiny as a reason for the lack of joint research projects within the university, several asserted that international donors give staff more freedom.

A few of the assistant professors I interviewed who had obtained their PhDs from the U.S. said that self-education seminars were a regular occurrence. These self-education seminars went in a circle so that every professor would teach the others at least once and a positive horizontal bonding teaching circle was created. These professors were the most optimistic and creative concerning all sorts of social capital and the creation of a knowledge society within the university, nationally, regionally, and internationally. However, they all said that their ties to the U.S. were currently stronger than to anywhere else. Senior professors were, overall, less optimistic and mostly spoke of memberships in human rights organizations and think tanks or institutions that appeared to have international linkages, although they declined to specify much about them making it very unclear as to what kind and type of social capital might be at work here.

Yet another reason that cannot be discounted for the lack of joint work has to do with the Faculty's insistence on strict Weberian bureaucratic methods. This is particularly true when it comes to other university Faculties as well as with other national universities. Senior professors, in particular, spoke of failures they perceived in some of the other

Faculties at Cairo University. They regarded the problems as primarily due to financial shortfalls and increasing student enrolments. For example, the Faculty of Law was criticized as they had tiers of education depending upon whether or not students could afford to pay for quality instruction. This was regarded as resulting from an underfunding and overcrowding situation that plagues the entire university. National universities are completely free; however hundreds of thousands are currently enrolled across the country. Many students come from poor families and are state-subsidized but professors' salaries do not increase. The Faculty of Law was said to be resolving this particular problem by giving students who could afford it the extra instruction needed to enhance their ability to land a good job after graduation and be well-paid. Although professors related these sorts of non-Weberian practices sympathized, all found it problematic and preferred the emphasis upon merit found in their own Faculty. It is possible that other university Faculties were viewed as unreliable partners due to the failures of the merit system within certain faculties. A fear of taint could also be at work here.

Graduate students declaimed any involvement with associations although one senior graduate student claimed that membership in the Cairo Student Union was mandated by law. He said he was not very active. Other graduate students might simply have not seen this as terribly important to their academic pursuits and may well have asserted no associations out of fear of the state. Surveillance and harassment of undergraduate students is far more pervasive and threatening for students than professors. Most Egyptian students avoid involvement in student unions and associations. While graduate students are likely a little freer than undergraduates, they do not have the same freedoms

as professors. Graduate students are between cultures in a manner of speaking. They are in the process of gradually being inducted into an academic culture that functions differently from the rest of Egypt. They assert strong bonds with other graduate students—particularly those of the same year. As they all share one office bonding is facilitated. However, despite a very small sample size, I did obtain interviews with people at various stages of the process. The most advanced were least interested in bonding with fellow Egyptians and spoke most of their experiences and links made abroad. Additionally, one graduate student spoke quite frankly that the main tendency recently was to bridge the gap between state and society through joining the NDP. However, he asserted that this means of bridging by intellectuals between state and society was usually negatively evaluated as a pure search for satisfaction of personal interests. Further, my informant argued that what this really meant was that the intellectual was most likely actually acting as a measure of legitimacy of the system rather than really playing a bridge role.

## The Regional Networking Experience

Regional contacts and conferences were thought to be important and some graduate students and professors had even attended a few. More than one mentioned that certain problems were associated with regional projects and conferences as Egypt had relatively more academic freedom than many. While there is no monolith here, the Gulf countries, with the exception of Qatar, were perceived to have nearly zero tolerance. The professors with American PhDs enjoyed pointing out to me that I should understand this as the atmosphere regarding free inquiry as well as the perception of certain groups of people changed perceptibly after September 11, 2001. Indeed, discussion of national and

regional constraints often sidetracked us a bit as the politicization of anything to do with the Middle East and Islam within the U.S. were hardly anything that I could disagree with and we would end up discussing whether greater constraints came from society, the state, or just perceived state intervention. We all found it likely that constraints were mutually constitutive in the U.S. as well as Egypt and the Arab region.

One of the graduate students opined that regionally Arab academics tend to want to study topics that draw consensus. Controversial conferences have occurred but tend to be very low profile while consensus conferences were well-publicized and had high attendance. He suggested that this was likely due to strong Arab preferences for consensus both culturally and politically. Regional conferences, in particular, emphasize consensual topics. For example, a conference discussing international law defending the independence of Arab states against foreign invasions was a noncontroversial consensus builder in the Arab world that did not cross any state or societal red lines. What this might contribute to regional social capital and an Arab knowledge society is rather inconclusive though.

Another issue inhibiting the development of regional ties concerned the tendency of many Arab nationals to study for their PhDs abroad. One of my informants estimated that approximately 90 percent of Jordanian PhDs obtained their PhDs in the U.S. or the U.K. Despite being a graduate of an American institution himself he suggested more should be done with Egypt as a resource for higher education. Indeed, senior professors more or less agreed with this assessment as they complained of an Egyptian brain drain although the brain drain occurs at various levels of education and the Egyptian export of unskilled labor may now be greater than its export of educated persons to the larger Arab

world. Senior professors tended to have two major emphases in my interviews with them. Some emphasized academic freedom and the constraints placed upon it by the state and society. Others strongly emphasized the decline of Egyptian education and the lack of money for education, research, and knowledge acquisition, production, and dissemination. I will cover this in much more detail in the next chapter.

That Egypt was the brains of the Arab world was expressed quite freely by a professor who never had time for the full interview but did find the time for a short, informal chat with me. It is most unfortunate that we were never able to find a time for an interview as this professor is known for her work with Yusuf al Qaradawi and on Islamic feminism. It would have been useful to know if Islamists have a greater density of regional relations and, if so, is greater consensus needed or does consensus on the importance of Islam allow for more controversy? However, this professor is so busy and involved in so many projects—including global interfaith ones that I am fortunate that I received the ten minutes I did receive. In contrast to two other female professors who gave me full interviews, this professor was very engaged in associational activity and public life. This would likely surprise many Westerners as she was the only female professor I interviewed who wore a headscarf and is openly Islamist in orientation. This professor appeared to experience much lesser dichotomization between the role expected of her at home and her scholarly and public intellectual roles. She raised more questions than answers but certainly confounds some Western expectations and, most likely, many elite Egyptian expectations.

## International Social Capital: Networks

It was frequently unclear as to whether some associations were more local or international. Professors did not wish to specify and Egyptian law concerning funding sources and government oversight likely has a great deal to do with what can be only be called evasiveness in this regard. The most senior professors had multiple affiliations and likely relied a great deal on foreign funding. They all emphasized the responsibility of intellectuals and researchers to investigate and resolve societal problems and contribute to development and all noted that funding is problematic. While the government talks a good game, the reality is that a system of competition for professors was under consideration to replace tenure. Further all universities are required to place funds in the central bank that is under the control of the Minister of Finance. Rather than supporting research, the ministry of finance appeared to think that research centers were a source of funding for the government. Under these conditions, professors are understandably a little cagey.

While monetary support for conference attendance was not given by national universities, junior professors noted that private think tanks—mostly international—were willing to fund conference participation. At many of these conferences, professors were free to pursue or reinforce international contacts. Maintenance of these contacts has been greatly facilitated by the internet, despite the unreliability of Cairo University's network access. The group of recent PhDs from American universities maintained online subscriptions to their former university library system in order to maintain access to a reliable data base as Cairo University has had to cancel a number of subscriptions and will likely be cancelling more due to lack of funds. All had maintained memberships in

American academic associations although all agreed that multicultural ties were positive for scholarship and mentioned international consortiums of universities as well as membership in regional organizations such as the African Political Science Association and the Arab Political Science Association. One mentioned that after the peace treaty with Israel multicultural and international ties grew for Egyptians. These same professors also joined email groups. One professor told me that with the internet creating and maintaining links to academics in other countries was quite easy. He would email if he had questions about their work or was interested in what they might have to say about aspects of his. He said most people would answer and, if they did not, it was a small investment for possibly great rewards. However, these were junior professors and they all emphasized that they needed to pursue opportunities that would pay them for their time and expertise.

The graduate student from the last chapter who complained that she was expected to be more stupid did find numerous horizontal contacts in Europe. While seemingly almost completely disengaged from other graduate students at Cairo University and quite skeptical of organizations and associations, she kept in contact with people she had met at the university in Maastricht. She said that Maastricht was very international and that people came from all over. She enjoyed the extensive interaction and said it was the best experience of her life. Her contacts would invite each other to their home countries or countries of residence, disseminate information concerning good positions and opportunities, as well as engaging each other in the exploration of projects that might be done together. The bridging social capital between peers she gained in Europe was really quite extensive. Intriguingly as it involved sojourner students it was both bonding and

bridging in nature. She had every intention of pursuing a PhD in Europe—not so much because she enjoyed the Europeans but because sojourner students in Europe were so dynamic and well-connected with each other.

## Social Capital and Implications for Knowledge

Critics who accuse Robert Putnam of an overly romanticized view of bottom-up processes and the bridging types of social capital may well have had Egypt in mind. Faculty members become increasingly adept at discovering and managing the bridging kind of social capital or networking. Their work and interests are often facilitated by international contacts. However, none of this has promoted research into knowledge that would lead to overall good governance in Egypt. In fact, the Faculty appears squeezed between a controlling state and an apathetic distrustful society that perceives a university degree in a quite instrumental manner. Their international contacts and networks far exceeded local ones in number, depth, and quality. As these people are social scientists, they want to be engaged with society but are seemingly better able to interact academically with international contacts.

To a certain extent, the ability of intellectuals to communicate and interact more with other intellectuals regardless of national origin may be universal. However Putnam's work posits that horizontal associational activities promote trust more broadly than is, perhaps, the case. While one could argue that the networks of academics have promoted trust among academics, it has clearly not promoted trust within Egypt. Other Faculties, buckling under the sheer weight of being asked to do too much with too little, were not completely trusted as the merit system declined. The security presence on campus and the political appointment of deans does not seem conducive to building trust and it is not.

It cannot be ascertained how much the decision not to work on joint projects within Cairo University can be ascribed to the pervasive security presence and state controls over research. It would seem, though, that it must play a role if the same professors have no issue with joint work when done within think tanks or international research centers that "allow for more freedom." If professors and graduate students trust each other more on international sites or privately held ones, what can we learn about the role of the state in facilitating or undermining social capital?

Once again, my female graduate student informant demonstrates an issue that can occur with regard to overly romantic notions concerning dense locally networked types of association. She was quite disengaged from fellow graduate students. She said that this was because the office was too crowded and computer access to limited for her to get her work done and, likely, there is a lot of truth to that. However, her increased international contacts—other sojourner students in Europe—received far more animated attention from her than did local contacts. What this appears to demonstrate is that adherence to Weberian norms within the Faculty as well as emphasis on academic excellence meant that those people who became more and more acculturated to an academic understanding of rules and norms of conduct became more disengaged or even alienated from a state and society that were conducting themselves and their personal relations by other criteria. Escaping an overcrowded office to work alone and maintain contacts via the internet also means escaping the real or perceived scrutiny of security as well as escaping other graduate students that might not really have acculturated into the critical and analytical types of thought of the dedicated graduate student. This is a marked instance of one way

bifurcation between the intellectual and society can occur. They do not trust each other and more association appears likely to create more contempt than camaraderie and trust.

My female graduate student informant is at an early stage of perceiving society similarly to the professor I discussed in the introduction to this dissertation. He perceived the urban masses as incapable of spontaneous social capital. He is not quite right but there is a problem within society and particularly between social classes with regard to trust. The professor does not see the spontaneous social capital that the masses are capable of because they do not trust him. He does not really trust them either.

An incident outside my formal research illustrates some of the fear that animates this lack of trust. I was in Egypt when student members of the Muslim Brotherhood chose to have a martial arts demonstration at *Al-Azhar*. The next day, I could not gain admission to the Cairo University Campus at any gate. The gates are managed by security personnel and, in my case, they usually accepted my I.D. card from the University of Utah. Sometimes they would want a Cairo University student to accompany me or at least drop me off at the gate. There did not appear to be tremendous consistency and the day after the demonstration, I could not gain entry onto the campus. All security officers said absolutely not until one told me I could go on campus if I left my passport with him. Needless to say, I returned to my Cairo home and called my interview subjects to inform them that I could not interview them that day. Some said they would leave my name with security on another day while other senior professors suggested I come to their office at the American University in Cairo instead. Professors trusted that I was what I said and were completely familiar with research as well as knowledgeable about many aspects of my topic and never questioned whether I might really be a CIA operative or whether

what I was doing would actually bring the ire of the state upon their heads. However, the mother of the family I lived with panicked when she first heard I could not get onto campus. When I was finally able to fully explain what happened, she calmed but was uncomfortable with me for a few days. Her first fear was really that I would get the whole family in trouble with state security. Denial of entrance onto campus by security indicated to her that they thought I was doing something wrong and the whole family would be vulnerable as they were giving me a home in Egypt. When no security ever showed up at her door, she relaxed. Her other fear that I might really be affiliated with the CIA was put to rest by her brother, an acquaintance of mine in Philadelphia.

This incident and my host mother's fears demonstrate the lack of trust that inhibits connections between intellectuals and society and provides a reason for that lack of trust. It also demonstrates Ayubi's contention that bureaucracy is more about power than efficiency. I rather doubt that security on campus thought I was dangerous. They had seen me before and people known to them had vouched that I was not a journalist out to get a story embarrassing to the Egyptian state. They did not know what to do with me and all feared doing the wrong thing. They would send me to other gates, saying I could get admission onto campus at that gate. Of course the next gate wanted to pass me along to the next and the next until finally someone particularly brave offered to allow me on campus in exchange for my passport.

The fences and gates that surround the university are indicative of why Egypt has failed to become a developmental state as can happen with the correct kinds, types, and overlaps of social capital. The people do not trust intellectuals and are not very interested in exposing either their own cooperative efforts or allowing glimpses into how they might

deal with what Ismail noted as the perception that the state is nowhere and yet it is everywhere. Intellectuals and the people are almost two different cultures inhabiting the same space. The senior professor who argued that the urban masses were unlikely to develop spontaneous social capital was not completely wrong. That spontaneous social capital that can bridge gaps amongst unequals is problematic in Egypt and his contention that intraelite cooperation was far more likely reflected actual experience with the urban masses. However, no one discusses how the security apparatus may block those bridges.

## Implications for Knowledge and the Faculty

Hilaire-Perez, in a critique of Mokyr's work asserts that the horizontal transmission of knowledge facilitates the micro inventions that can lead to more efficient production techniques. Horizontal transmission debugs, adapts and improves techniques. The virtuous horizontal teaching circle is a good example of how horizontal transmission can improve teaching techniques.[113] Asking questions via email even to strangers as fellow academics shows how work can be debugged through the use of information technology to bridge a hole. Too, horizontal bridging types of links across networks may facilitate research, job and scholarship opportunities, as well as providing links for joint projects.

Undergraduate students are a major point of contact. Socially relevant research may also bring academics into local communities. While I did speak with one professor who had worked with a couple of impoverished communities and had obtained their trust, most professors asserted that society does not understand the purpose of research and does not see the benefits and will not participate. That breakage has some greater consequences than the inability of those possessing propositional knowledge to really

[113] See Liliane Hilaire-Perez, "Natural Dyestuffs and Industrial Culture in Europe, 1750-1880 (Review)." *Technology and Culture*. 41 (April, 2000):360-362.

pass that onto those who have practical knowledge. This break impacts the horizontal transmission of knowledge as well. Refinement of technique and the attendant phenomena that Hilaire-Perez argues is an important component of development occurs among intellectuals but without linkages to practitioners. What, then, is refined by society?

A major difficulty with ascribing the greater share of responsibility to society is that the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University comes out of that same society. If the merit-based structure of the Faculty and study abroad and interaction with fellow graduate students from diverse backgrounds at Western universities contributes to a certain change in perspective concerning the utility of horizontal and vertical pathways of knowledge acquisition, production, and dissemination, then it becomes very difficult to argue that society determines social capital and access to knowledge. Structure appears to have a stronger role than culture does. While the Egyptian state sometimes appears willing to sell academics out to society in exchange for a little legitimacy they also contribute towards a climate of fear and distrust. State limitations on academic freedom may have greater consequence for knowledge acquisition, production, and dissemination than society's limitations.

Knowledge Acquisition

The state's educational system promotes an instrumental view of knowledge acquisition. Egypt uses the French model of exams. Exam scores determines what schools a child can go to and a child's future is largely determined by the fifth grade exam. That exam will determine where a child can attend middle school while the eighth grade exam determines secondary school and, of course, the leaving exam

(*althaniwiyyaal'amiyya*) determines the Faculty a young person can enter. Schools are quite overcrowded and teachers are quite underpaid and a system has developed wherein teachers do their real teaching with tutoring. Students' parents pay for the tutoring that students need if they are to get good exam scores. The higher the grade, the more the tutoring costs. Students and parents are encouraged to think strategically in terms of knowledge acquisition for two reasons. First, the exams depend upon student memorization of material. Students want to know what will be on the exam and memorize prodigious amounts of material geared strictly towards the exam. Knowledge not on the exam is not even acquired as it could possibly interfere with knowledge needed for those all important exams. Second the increasing need to pay extra in order to get a child adequately educated to obtain a job later in life, encourages instrumentalized and strategic acquisition of information. When real instruction costs in scarce resources all knowledge acquisition is subject to a cost/benefit analysis.

The habit of acquiring knowledge strategically is ingrained by the time students reach the university. Also some Faculties are adopting the primary and secondary school answer to overcrowding and underfunding so the tendency of the people to perceive knowledge acquisition in terms of a cost/benefit analysis is perpetuated. That type of strategic acquisition of knowledge thoroughly undermines a knowledge society wherein knowledge is pursued for the sake of knowledge. It also undermines the development of a knowledge economy and the developmental state as both of these perceive knowledge in positive sum terms rather than the zero sum terms encouraged by Egypt's educational structure and its failings.

Classroom discussions are something of a mixture of horizontal and vertical paths of knowledge. In Egypt, classroom discussion is constrained by the security presence, self-censorship from professors and overt censorship. This greatly inhibits knowledge acquisition. Much of this begins well before university and again demonstrates the state-society interaction that inhibits the pursuit of knowledge.

> Long before university, Egyptian students are conditioned to regard censorship in the classroom as acceptable. Journalist Bahega Hussein, for example, described how the Ministry of Education censored the romantic subplots in plays taught in secondary school. "It creates a generation of boys and girls. . . who find everything can be treated as against their own tradition and country. When they reach the university they cannot appreciate freedom," SamiaMehrez and other professors blame the rigid educational system for producing weak university students. "Students are heir to a national education system based on hierarchy and oppression and memorization. It kills their brains; thinking in itself is horror because if they do, they are defying the authority of the teacher," Mehrez said. This early training makes it more difficult for professors to explain the dangers of censorship.[114]

One obstacle to knowledge acquisition of the higher sort may stem more purely from society than the state. The girls who drop out of graduate school may well do so from societal pressures to get married and have a family. As boys need to have money in order to get married as well as be able to demonstrably support a family, they would not get societal or familial pressure to just drop out of school—unless it was for a good paying job. The female graduate student that appeared so disengaged from other graduate students might well be dealing with pressure by avoiding it and it may well come more from her fellow female graduate students than her family. Urban Egypt does not demonstrate any particular prejudice against educating girls. However, although many Egyptian women work, the societal myth of normalcy is that the woman stays home and manages the house and children, while the man earns money to support them. In a

[114] Human Rights Watch, "Reading Between The 'Red Lines'": 40-41.

certain sense, then, society expects all women to have the same career path—wife and mother. In a sense then, society views women in higher education as delaying growing up; despite the substantial respect most people have for education. Friends and classmates may play a far stronger role in pressuring young women to conform than does any state policy.

Knowledge Production

It is, indeed, quite odd that professors who have no problem with joint work in an international research center or think tank assiduously avoid it at Cairo University. The notion that it is due to the emphasis on individual work in the promotion process does not actually work all that well unless all work done with outside institutions was excluded from consideration and I could find no evidence that it was so. What makes scholars avoid each other in location and seek each other out in another?

The only explanation I could find was the pervasive security presence. The very presence of a security office at the Faculty seemed to promote an atmosphere of distrust. Oddly these same professors trusted each other in other locations. How might the feeling that one is always being watched inhibit horizontal avenues of knowledge production? How does the impression of subtle but pervasive control break down the human relationships that make up social capital? Local networks have a difficult time finding bridging mechanisms that are not marred by distrust or do not appear to have insurmountable access costs.

The scholars at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science seemed almost more comfortable bridging a hole with colleagues in the West than with each other. The lack of trust cannot be about fearing that another is an informant as the same professors that

avoided working with each other at Cairo University might seek each other out elsewhere. Do all Egyptians live with the feeling that Big Brother is watching them unless they are in private spaces? How much might that fear of the state account for failures to create bridges amongst intellectuals, masses, and state officials?

I cannot prove that fear is a factor in Egypt's worsening economic and political situation. I can think of no measure that would actually indicate that fear inhibits social capital, thereby accounting for much of *The Arab Human Development Report*'s knowledge deficit. Also, removal of the security apparatus would not result in the automatic opening of a free inquiry society. Society is, in fact, quite conservative and not necessarily strong admirers of academic freedom. Professors informed me that it was easier to work with political questions than with ones about Islam. However, it does seem that state and society are reinforcing their own worst aspects when it comes to free inquiry and knowledge production—rather than producing the virtuous cycle of knowledge envisioned by Mokyr as so essential to the translation of the industrial enlightenment into the industrial revolution.

Knowledge Dissemination

Within the horizontal dimension of social capital, professors and graduate students emphasized networks. Burt, of course, would not be surprised by this as his argument asserts that it is really the structural hole or the gap that is bridged that is most important. The structural holes or gaps that are not bridged might be equally important.

The classroom discussion issue is as applicable to knowledge dissemination as it is to knowledge acquisition. Students cannot freely voice their opinions. While the security apparatus can certainly cast pall over any kind of free and open discussion, professors

may implement their own red lines. These red lines occur particularly with regard to politics and religion. Professors are also a product of the Egyptian national education system and of its conservative society. In this atmosphere the safest knowledge to acquire and consume is of the instrumental sort.

Horizontal dissemination acted in favor of a knowledge society only in the case of academics. The senior professor who asserted that intraelite social capital was far more likely to occur than spontaneous, bottom up social capital very much had these types of horizontal and vertical knowledge flows in mind. However, what may be missing from his conceptualization is that information flows amongst the urban masses also occur. This area of a hole that is not bridged is worth some study. Burt's contention that it is the structural holes that tell us the most may explain this bifurcated perception between intellectual elites and the urban masses.

## Conclusion

Ayubi argues that even fairly well rationalized bureaucracies can be used for regime power maintenance through key patronage positions that depend upon pleasing the supreme power holder rather than in adhering to proceduralized efficiency. This problem very much confronts the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University. The insertion of the security apparatus produces fear and self-censorship while politically appointed university rectors and deans are less concerned with the advancement of 'knowledge for knowledge sake' than in the advancement of their own political careers.

These problems, as my interviews demonstrate, produce vast problems for a knowledge society in its dissemination, acquisition, and production mechanisms. In short, intellectuals are hobbled and constrained by state interests as they try to pursue

precisely what caused their interest in an academic life in the first place. This frustration and difficulty in trying to do one's job and serve society as one sees fit through research and instruction leads many to build upon their international networks. New opportunities are facilitated through bridging social capital in international knowledge networks. Local and regional networks appear far less important to the academics I interviewed.

While international knowledge networks that exemplify the bridging metaphor of social capital have been far more accessible to intellectual elites than the masses, recent advancements in communications technology has introduced new knowledge networks. These new knowledge networks are primarily inhabited by the young and college educated but they are not organized or facilitated by a much constrained and burdened university. In the next chapter I will discuss what has changed in Egypt and how a revolution could occur as well as shed some light on why the university was more spectator than participant in the events leading to the ouster of Hosni Mubarak.

# CHAPTER 7

# EGYPT AND THEARAB SPRING OF 2011

## Introduction

In December 2010, a man by the name of Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself after police confiscated his vegetable cart. Bouazizi's act of protest set off a string of events that is still shaking the Arab World. His act triggered similar acts of protest in Algeria and successfully began the demonstrations that brought down Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. From there protests spread to Egypt.[115] Eighteen days of protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square ousted President Mubarak.[116]

The fall of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was not predicted by anyone and, indeed, despite events in Tunisia his ouster was a surprise. Surprise was less a product of the belief that the Egyptian regime was particularly democratic than because Mubarak had constructed what appeared to be a particularly resilient and robust authoritarianism. Mubarak's Egypt appeared a bastion of stability with its carefully staged elections, clientelism, and strong ability to fragment and co-opt opposition forces. Hitherto, I have examined the balance of forces as they constrained and effected scholarly production in

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[115]Yasmine Ryan, "The Tragic Life of a Street Vendor," *Al Jazeera English* http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html
Gary Blight and Sheila Pulham, "Arab spring: an interactive timeline of Middle East protests," *Guardian.co.uk.* May 3, 2011. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline

[116] Ahmed Shokr, "18 Days of Protest" *Middle East Report* 41 (Spring 2011): http://merip.org/author/ahmad-shokr

the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University. Constraints on scholars apparently had the desired effect of producing quiescence and scholars pursued international contacts in order to gain access to knowledge. However, the balance of power changed in society if not the university and the protests that erupted on January 25, 2011 in Tahrir Square, brought down Hosni Mubarak's thirty-year rule.

## Framing the Revolution

Three major frames have been used to explain the momentous events of January and February in Cairo. The first frame utilizes technology and the new media to explain the Egyptian revolution. The focus here is on internet-savvy and well-connected youth and the writings of Gene Sharp as well as the contributions made by Serbian youth who helped oust Milosevic through nonviolent means. The second frame advances the demonstration effect of Tunisia to explain the surprising outpouring of the Egyptian masses onto the streets and into Tahrir Square. This explanation also usually notes the importance of social media as Tunisian activists communicated their experiences and tips to Egyptians. The third explanation advances the frame of economic crises to explain the surprising events in Tahrir Square. The global recession has increased prices of commodities—particularly on food.[117] Riots for bread or food subsidies are not a new occurrence in Egypt and have, successfully, gained concessions from the regime but have never made any kind of leadership ouster or regime change.

Indeed all three explanatory frames contain truth and contribute towards an explanation of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. However, none are, by themselves, adequate to explain the persistence of demonstrators or the ouster of Mubarak. What is

[117] Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution" *Middle East Report* 41(Spring 2011): http://merip.org/mer/mer258/praxis-egyptian-revolution

needed is a model to understand what changed in the balance of power between state and society. Bellin's model of robust authoritarianism, used in Chapter 2 to explore the role of the state, is also useful to examining what changed so that robust authoritarianism weakened.

Bellin's model of robust authoritarianism and failure to initiate democratic transitions relies on Theda Skocpol's classic work on social revolutions. Skocpol argues that revolution occurs when the state's coercive apparatus lacked the will and capacity to crush revolutionary movements. Bellin brings Skocpol's model to democratic transitions and, although the events in Egypt are called a revolution, they are more accurately described as reformist as actors sought a democratic transition rather than a true social revolution. The Egyptian Revolution may yet qualify as a political revolution, although that remains to be seen, but is not a social revolution as understood by Skocpol. Bellin outlines four factors to explain the conditions that will cost a state's coercive apparatus the will or capacity to maintain its grip on power. These include fiscal health, international support networks, institutionalization of the state security apparatus, and popular mobilization.[118]

Fiscal Health

Fiscal health refers to the maintenance of the security apparatus. If security personnel go unpaid and supplies are threatened, they are far less likely to defend the state's regime. In the case of a security establishment that has been weakened by a prolonged fiscal crisis, the security apparatus may be weakened from within and collapse upon

[118]Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism": 143-146.

confrontation even with a weak society.[119] Poor fiscal health is not precisely the problem for the Egyptian security apparatus although, admittedly, the economic explanation advanced by some analysts is not without merit. In order to understand the change in will, we need to discuss the overall Egyptian economy.

As noted in Chapter 2, liberalizing economic reforms changed the patterns of patronage from distribution of resources to crony capitalism. John Sfakianakis's research examines the lack of transparency and accountability in 1990s reform in Egypt. Elite businessmen and bureaucratic elites turned privatization into a means of rent distribution in return for political support to the regime.[120] The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights had urged Mubarak to review his privatization policies that "helped impoverish people."[121]

Anger with corruption was clearly manifest among demonstrators in Tahrir Square. While corruption trials of top regime officials and, indeed, Mubarak himself, proceed as of this writing, economic stagnation, increased inequalities, and concern over economic opportunity provides a more clear explanation as to what brought many protestors into the streets. Egypt's youthful population is suffering from a lack of opportunity. The problem was recognized in the Egyptian Human Development Report 2010 (hereafter EHDR 2010).

The EHDR 2010 lists several factors that exclude youth from full participation in society; however, the two most important within the context of this dissertation are education and unemployment. The quality of education has declined over the years in

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[119]Ibid., 144.
[120]Sfakianakis, "Five ways to bring investment back into Egypt"
[121] Quoted in Fareed Ezzedine, "Egypt: An Emerging" Market "of Double Repression" *Middle East Report* 210 (November 18, 1999): http://merip.org/mero/mero111899

Egypt as overcrowding takes its toll. Limited resources and an overworked and underfunded academic staff struggle to disseminate relevant knowledge to an enormous cohort of youth. Education should serve as a mechanism of inclusion and increase youthful competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy.[122] While the failures of Egyptian education contribute to the problem of youthful unemployment, those failures are not the only factor associated with youthful unemployment and underemployment.

The youth cohort of 18-29-year-olds examined in the EHDR 2010 are the most educated Egyptian cohort to come of age and enter the work force in modern Egyptian history. Those born in 1985 have an average of ten years of school while those born in 1950 had attained only an average of four years. Gender disparities have also decreased.[123] However, increased education has not, necessarily, led to greater employment opportunities. There is an apparent mismatch between quality and type of education in Egypt and the needs of a knowledge-driven global economy. Lack of employment opportunities is not solely a problem of mismatch though.

Although the Egyptian economy has grown significantly since IMF mandated reforms began nearly two decades ago and macroindicators have stabilized, these gains have failed to translate into increased living standards for the general population or increased job opportunities for the growing number of Egyptians entering the job market. The Mubarak regime's propensity to reform the economy while maintaining political power has led to increased crony capitalism at the expense of the public welfare.

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[122]World Bank, *Egyptian Human Development Report 2010*, 44.
[123]Ibid., 155.

Unemployment, underemployment, and employment in the informal sector have increased even as educational attainment has increased in Egypt. The withdrawal of the state from public services as in *Bulaq* (see Chapter 2), underfunding for education, and the public perception of a poorly performing economy due to a lack of employment opportunities contributed to Egypt's 2011 Revolution and the strong representation of youth within that movement.

Youth were not the only group disgruntled with neoliberal reforms that catered to elite at the expense of the masses though. Protestors from the working class were also an important group amongst the demonstrators who made their voices heard in Egypt. Veterans of many attempted strikes and other workplace disruptions for better pay and working conditions, industrial laborers understood better than many the need for political reform to gain some access to Egypt's apparent improved economy.[124]Kienle's observation, discussed in Chapter 2, that economic losers were being systematically deprived of their right to resist[125] is important to understanding why Egyptian fiscal health was not all that it appeared through macro-indicators. The atrophy of the civilian political system in favor of the military and security core of the regime, remarked upon by Henry and Springborg,[126] caught up with the regime as more sectors of the population coordinated and cooperated in massive protests.

However, none of this quite explains why a coercive apparatus in good fiscal health declined to crush the revolution. First, the Egyptian revolution was not a revolution in the most proper sense of the term. It was and is a reformist movement. Protestors'

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[124] El-Ghobashy, "The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution" http://merip.org/mer/mer258/praxis-egyptian-revolution
[125]Eberhard Kienle, *A Grand Delusion; Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt,* pp.167-193.
[126]Henry and Springborg *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East.* 147.

demands were limited to demands for recognition and political rights. Second, while protestors demanded limitations upon the police and the Central Security Force, the role of the army was not threatened. Finally, as the army is drawn by conscription from society, it is likely that they sympathized with protestors. All of this likely increased the calculation of overall cost to crush demonstrators to the military. Despite being well-funded and having the capacity to crush demonstrations, the military chose not to do that. In other words, capacity was not the problem. The military lacked the will. The following variables should clarify why and how the calculations of the military changed.

International Support Networks

According to Bellin, the robustness of a regime's coercive apparatus depends upon the maintenance of international support networks. Withdrawal of foreign financial backing can devastate the fiscal health of a coercive apparatus while the withdrawal of rhetorical support can devastate will as an authoritarian regime may recalculate how to maintain itself and international support.[127] While American financial support to the military was never in question, demonstrators had gained formidable international support networks of their own. The increased international support networks of demonstrators changed cost calculations for the coercive apparatus and its own international support networks.

The demonstration effect from Tunisia cannot be dismissed. Similarly to Tunisian youth, Egyptian youth were also fed up with corruption and frustrated by the failure of the state to promote employment opportunities commensurate with their educations. The link was not as spontaneous as some suppose though.

[127]Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," 144.

In 2008, Egyptians and Tunisians had set up online groups that exchanged experiences. The Progressive Youth of Tunisia, formed in the wake of a failed strike, linked up with Egyptian activists who had established an online presence to maintain momentum from the failed March, 2008 strike in Mahalla, Egypt. The April 6 movement was born from the efforts of youth to link with the industrial workers in Mahalla. The nationwide strike of April 6 turned into a nonevent throughout the nation, although workers in Mahalla were violently repressed by police forces.[128] Nationwide, the solidarity strikes were blocked by police forces.[129]

Clearly another strategy and more planning were necessary and Egyptian activists looked beyond simple social networking to learn from successful movements and integrate those experiences into their strategic repertoire. Much has been made of the writings of American academic, Gene Sharp. Sharp's ideas about the utility of nonviolent resistance to police states were, indeed, important but the practical experience of Serbian youth in their ouster of Milosevic proved indispensible.

In 2009, Egyptian blogger and April 6 movement activist, Mohammed Adel, went to Belgrade, Serbia. Belgrade is home to the Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS) and is run by Serbians who had successfully ousted Slobadan Milosevic in a nonviolent youth struggle through the organization known as Otpor. From CANVAS, Adel learned how to take organization from the computer and out onto the streets. Upon his return from studying with CANVAS, Adel taught members of the April 6 movement and Kifaya how to conduct peaceful demonstrations, avoid violence, and

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[128] David Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger, "A Tunisian-Egyptian Link that Shook Arab History" *New York Times*, February 13, 2011 http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/world/middleeast/14egypt-tunisia-protests.html?_r=1&ref=todayspaper&pagewanted=all

[129] Tina Rosenberg, "Revolution U" *Foreign Policy*, February 16, 2011: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/02/16/revolution_u?page=full

confront violence from security forces as well as how to encourage people to move out into the streets in protest.[130] Organizers also drew lessons from an Egyptian expatriate group known as the Academy for Change located in Qatar. Run by Egyptians in their thirties, the group promotes Gene Sharp's ideas concerning nonviolent resistance. Members of the April 6 movement and *Kifaya* explained that the Academy for Change was like Marx and they were like Lenin.[131] It was up to youth activists to put ideas into practice and with lessons learned from CANVAS, they did just that.

While it is clear that online organizing is not enough and ideas must be translated into action, Egyptian activists received more online support in the form of Google marketing executive, Wael Ghonim. Although Ghonim says that what he did was build a brand, the Facebook site he started and ran "We are All Khalid Said" was instrumental in duplicating Otpor's tactic of making resistance cool and disseminating the skills or knowledge people needed to oust Mubarak and bring reform to Egypt. Ghonim worked with Mohammed El-Baradei, better known as the head of the IAEA before the Egyptian Revolution, before starting the page "We Are All Khalid Said" which gathered 400,000 followers on Facebook.[132]Ghonim thought Facebook an ideal way to disseminate information as once a person becomes a fan of a page, the posts put up on the page appear in an individual's newsfeed. In Ghonim, Egyptian activists found an individual who knew marketing and was able to disseminate information far and wide through social networking media. However, it would be a mistake to think that social networking media alone make for a revolution. Ghonim's Facebook page provided more bridges to

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[130] Ibid.
[131]Kirkpatrick and Sanger, "Tunisians and Egyptians Collaborated."
[132]*Newsweek*, "How Wael Ghonim Sparked Egypt's Uprising": http://www.newsweek.com/2011/02/13/the-facebook-freedom-fighter.html

more people but actual tactics and strategy came from other internationally located groups such as Serbia's CANVAS and the expatriate Egyptian group in Qatar, Academy for Change. In order to further disseminate information, activists published a twenty-six page pamphlet called "How to Protest Intelligently."[133] The pamphlet explained goals and urged people to adopt a unified stance as well as educating demonstrators on nonviolent strategies.[134]

The "spontaneous" revolution in Tahrir Square, although loosely inspired by Tunisia's success, was years in the making. International support networks to gain and disseminate strategies, tactics, and build bridges ranged from Serbia to Qatar and beyond. Failed demonstrations added to lessons and urged activists to learn from successful agents of change such as the former Otpor activists that make up CANVAS. The Egyptian Revolution is a case of bridging social capital wherein new knowledge was brought in to make a difference in how demonstration could occur and succeed despite an authoritarian state willing to use its coercive apparatus to crush demonstrators. The Egyptian regime did send out police from the Central Security Force known as *baltigiyya* (thugs) to disrupt demonstrations and foment violence. They failed. While one reason for the failure is the superior organizing skills learned by activists and disseminated to the masses, another reason is the decision by the regime's international support networks to not support them this time.

American support for continued coercion and violent repression was not forthcoming as protests continued to demand Mubarak's exit from power. On the one hand, the Americans had a hard time justifying continued support to a regime that they had urged

[133]Rosenberg, "Revolution U."
[134] Ibid.

to make political reforms for years in the face of demonstrators making demands for those self-same reforms. On the other, the usual regime deployment of opposition figures as dangerous Islamists failed to have the desired end of continued American support for Mubarak's rule as a bulwark against extremist Islamists.

Demonstrators were clearly not Islamists looking for a *sharia* driven state. The youth that drove the rebellion had reached out internationally so as to avoid links with compromised Egyptian political opposition groups and were able to maintain their framing of goals that were democratic and secular. While the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood eventually joined the movement in Tahrir Square they were not at all instrumental in organizing the initial event on Police Day.[135] The Muslim Brotherhood, like other established political groups, followed the youth and could not take over the movement without fatally crippling it. Many demonstrators exhibited no problem with the Brotherhood but said they would never vote for them. The American President, Barack Obama, could hardly back an unpopular regime in contradiction to the expressed desires of the people for political reform and within the frame of Islamism as irrelevant. Too, the efforts made by demonstrators to split the regime from the military paid off in terms of international support to the regime as the demands for political reform hardly made for a social revolution damaging to American political interests. Indeed support for Mubarak would have damaged American interests far more than stepping back and allowing events to proceed as the Egyptian people willed would have. While Arab autocrats likely feared the ouster of Egypt's Mubarak more than that of Tunisia's Ben Ali as a possible beginning of the end for robust Arab authoritarianism, Mubarak was largely

[135] Police Day celebrates the end of colonialism and the Muslim Brotherhood had urged youthful protestors to not use this particular day for protest as they thought it was a day when all Egyptians should be united.

seen as expendable and efforts were on to maintain the status quo by jettisoning an unpopular figurehead and trying to rewrite the elitist neoliberal formula into a constitution and law through temporary military rule.

Institutionalization of the State Security Apparatus

According to Bellin's model of robust authoritarianism, institutionalization of the security apparatus is inversely related to its will to repress initiatives for reform from below. By institutionalization, Bellin means:

> An institutionalized coercive apparatus is one that is rule-governed, predictable and meritocratic. It has established paths of career advancement and recruitment; promotion is based on performance, not politics there is a clear delineation between the public and the private that forbids predatory behavior vis-à-vis society; and discipline is maintained through the inculcation of a service ethic and strict enforcement of a merit-based hierarchy.[136]

Institutionalization, then, is akin to Feddarke et al.'s rationalization discussed in Chapters 2 and 5 wherein proceduralization and codification can encourage the type of embedded autonomy that promotes development. An institutionalized coercive apparatus can hold enough autonomy from the regime that it can sacrifice that regime without sacrificing itself. However, the institutionalization of the Egyptian security sector is questionable.

Although Bellin asserts that the militaries of Tunisia and Egypt are relatively well-institutionalized, the thin literature on the subject shows a decidedly mixed picture. Military conscription is obligatory so soldiers come from all social classes, but promotion depends upon connections made by family and social ties (*shillas*). *Shillas* are peer or kinship networks that support vertical bonding social capital and promote work advancement for individuals.[137] *Shilllas* are similar to the dense networks found in

[136]Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," 145.
[137] Said and Bakr, "Egypt Security Sector Reform," 4.

Egyptian traditional families and are duplicated to a certain degree by graduate students (T.A.'s) in The Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University. Recruitment is well institutionalized but promotion is more dependent on personal connections, and, thus, politicized. Another problem with the Egyptian military's institutionalization comes from a lack of clear delineation between the public and the private domains. The Egyptian military actively competes in the civilian economy. The military operates in the agricultural, tourist, and real estate sectors as well as operating a good sized defense industry. While this is legal, as is crony capitalism everywhere, it is quite unclear as to how much military business is subject to outside or civilian oversight.[138]

Nonetheless the military is quite distinct from the police and Central Security Force that so drew the ire of Egyptian demonstrators in Tahrir Square. As the police and Central Security Force were in charge of controlling public disorder and combating extremist forces, they were far more likely to be accused and guilty of brutality towards civilians. Too the Central Security Force is ambiguously defined and under the control of the Ministry of Interior. That particular force may have been perceived as a possible rival to the military.[139]

Rivalry between forces as well as a desire to protect certain perquisites enjoyed by the military in the civilian economy likely promoted the military's decision to jettison an alliance with Mubarak and certain members of the regime. The decision was likely facilitated by the distinction demonstrators made between the despised police and Central Security Force and beloved military forces. Demonstrator insistence on the ouster of

[138]Ibid., 12.
[139]Ibid., 8-9.

Mubarak as a condition for negotiation deepened the divide. However, the replacement of Mubarak with Omar Suleiman, former head of the Ministry of the Interior was not to be tolerated either. A military council took interim power and secular youth appeared to trust the army to supervise a transitional period.[140]

Elite division was likely far more important than institutionalization in granting protestors in Tahrir Square success. Demonstrators, schooled in tactics derived from Otpor and influenced by the writings of Gene Sharp, exploited that division. The army was given flowers while the police were verbally reviled. Protestor strategy may well have influenced the decision on the part of the military to maintain its access to power and economic perquisites by jettisoning key figureheads. Chants of "the army and the people are one hand" from demonstrators meant the military was in fact less risky than the regime. Although the relatively better institutionalization of the military likely helped protestors make such distinctions, elite divisions were far more decisive in gaining support for demonstrator demands for the ouster of Mubarak and, then, Suleiman. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces is currently overseeing a transition to a democratic and elected government. In the end, the military's position was less threatened by acceding to protestor demands and overseeing a process of transition than by trying to maintain the visible alliance amongst top military officers and regime officials. Such distinctions, elite divisions, and promised maintenance of international treaties also likely contributed to the American decision to jettison support to Mubarak.

Popular Mobilization

[140] See Ahmed A Namatallah, Mariam Fam and MaramMazen, "Mubarak Cedes Power to Egyptian Military as Protests Finish 30-Year Reigns" *Bloomberg*, Feb 12, 2011, Jeffrey Fleishman, "How Long Can Egyptian Military Navigate Middle Ground?" *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 7, 2011, and David D. Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger, "Egypt Officials Seek to Nudge Mubarak Out," *New York Times*, February 4, 2011.

Last in Bellin's model of robust authoritarianism is the level of popular mobilization. A security apparatus may lose the will to repress a reform movement if sufficiently large numbers of people are involved in the movement and turn out onto the streets. The cost of repressing large numbers of people mobilized for reform may well be calculated as too high—particularly when reform demands are not perceived to be devastating to its power.[141] The crowds in Tahrir Square had managed to increase popular mobilization, improve their strategy and tactics for gaining reform and exploiting possible elite divisions, and raised the cost of repression for an Egyptian military.

Mona El-Ghobashy identifies three protest sectors that have emerged over the past decade in Egypt. These include:

> The first is workplace protest, including collective action by industrial laborers, by civil servants, students and by trade practitioners such as auto mechanics and gold traders. The second is neighborhood protest, whether on the scale of a single street or an entire town. Protests by Copts, Sinai Bedouins and farmers are often organized along residential lines. Associational protest is the third sector. The organizing mediums here are professional associations such as lawyers' and doctors' syndicates; social movements such as the pro-Palestine solidarity campaigns, the anti-Mubarak Kifaya movement and the April 6 youth group; and the youth wings of political parties such as Ayman Nour's liberal Ghad, the Muslim Brothers, the liberal-national Wafd, the Nasserist Karama and the Islamist Wasat.[142]

Each of these sectors had collected a repertoire of collective action strategies that came together with the Police Day protests of January 25, 2011. This contrasts with the first failure to bring protest sectors together on April 6, 2008. The April 6 movement was born out of this failure though but maintained themselves as a group and sought out new knowledge.

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[141]Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East" 146.
[142] El-Gobashy, "The Praxis of Egyptian Revolution": http://merip.org/mer/mer258/praxis-egyptian-revolution

While the experiences of confronting the police by all protest sectors should not be discounted, the knowledge gained from CANVAS and the Academy for Change was also important to the success of the Egyptian Revolution. Protestors eschewed the political pranksterism of Otpor but did adopt the advice given by CANVAS, founded by Otpor. CANVAS advised April 6 representative, Mohammed Adel, to identify the power centers in Egypt and draw support from within those centers.[143] Egyptian protestors purposefully used tactics to divide elites. Further they relied on nonviolence as advised by the Academy for Change and the writings of Gene Sharp. Moreover, Egyptians gained knowledge from Tunisian activists who sent advice to their Egyptian counterparts concerning how such common items as onions, milk, and soda could limit the effects of tear gas.

Increased coordination of protest sectors with their repertoires of collective action and experience with the Egyptian police coupled with new knowledge gained from international support networks gained Egyptian the means to identify and exploit elite divisions. Slogans supporting the military were part of a strategy of division. Seemingly minimal demands for political reform meant that key elites could maintain their grip on power and economic privilege by simply jettisoning figures most associated with political repression and corruption.

Faced with higher levels of coordinated popular mobilization, the will of the Egyptian security apparatus faltered. The police came out in force, but were unable to make headway into dispersing crowds that had begun to feel their own political power. The military declined to fire on protestors. Indeed, the high command seemed somewhat

[143]Jelena, "Serbian ousters of Milosevic make mark in Egypt": http://www.canvasopedia.org/serbian-ousters-of-milosevic-make-mark-in-egypt.php

worried that soldiers, drawn from a cross-section of society, might join protestors. Police were quickly identified and protestors refused to allow the state security apparatus to defuse the movement by instigating violence and using divisions among the population to fragment the protests. The easily repressed pockets of mobilization from industrial workers, neighborhood protestors, and associational protestors coordinated to challenge the regime.

The challenge to the regime rather than the overall state is also key to the relative success of the protestors that took over Tahrir Square for eighteen days beginning on Police Day, January 25. President Mubarak was clearly expendable to the state security apparatus as were other visible figures. Protestors, relying on Serbian advice, were careful to exploit divisions and rejected any attempts to divide them. Further demands made for political reform are not nearly as problematic for elite that can manage a transition as demands for a social revolution would be. Egyptians were not interested in a social revolution in the shape of an Islamic state. Their demands were for political reform. Egyptians demanded an end to emergency laws and more accountable and transparent governance. Further they acquiesced to a transition managed by the Military Supreme Council. Military officials must have calculated that repression was not worth the effort when they could maintain control over a transition.

## Conclusion

Bellin's framework outlining the criteria of robust authoritarianism gives insight into the true exceptionalism of Middle Eastern politics. The strength of the authoritarian state's willingness to use its security apparatus to repress popular movements promotes better insight into Middle Eastern failures to initiate democratic transitions than do

explanations advanced from cultural or religious frameworks. The same factors of fiscal health, international support networks, institutionalization, and popular mobilization can also be used to explain how the balance of power changed in Egypt and a democratic transition began with a the possibility of a political revolution as an outcome of the protest movement.

Key in this account is shifts in international support networks and popular mobilization. New knowledge brought in and coordination amongst mobilization sectors changed the cost calculations for repression on the part of the Egyptian security apparatus. In other words social capital played a role in facilitating the influx of new knowledge and popular coordination. The knowledge brought in by April 6 activist Mohammed Adel used the experience of CANVAS while other activists brought in knowledge disseminated from other sources, such as the Academy for Change, closely follows the model of bridging social capital to bring in new knowledge. Coordination of popular sectors and ongoing advice from Tunisians that took place through social media were also a form of networked social capital that helped protestors create bridges amongst groups. Social capital then, as a concept, describes networks that can facilitate action while social media eases access costs for new information and promotes coordination amongst groups.

Within this context, though, the social capital of elites fragmented. Crony capitalism is also a form of social capital as are *shillas*. Social capital, then, cannot alone explain why changes in the balance of power between state and society shifted and elite networks divided to take advantage of new popular configurations. Causal factors lie within the state and the state's security apparatus. The state and its security apparatus were forced

to reconsider power maintenance strategies as societal groups networked with each other and groups abroad to gain better knowledge as to how to divide the elites. The will to repress faltered as elites recalibrated how to maintain control and privilege while giving into some reformist demands. Reform and institutionalization of reform is slowly occurring but dramatic changes appear unlikely and efforts to find stability and reconstruct an equilibrium acceptable to state and society will take time.

The university played no direct role. Law, political appointments, and the use of security services rendered the site of the university politically quiescent. Change in the willingness of youth to demonstrate did not come within the gates of a university where they were closely watched for political activity but from the opening up of access to other discontented youth in Egypt and the region as well as internationally. The utility of social media to promote the type of social capital that bridges structural holes is relatively clear. Formerly fragmented movements were better able to communicate and coordinate with one another. International civil society actors such as CANVAS helped teach that the opposition to a particular regime must strategize carefully. Within this changed environment what role was played by the university? While individuals may have played a role and certainly levels of educational attainment played an indirect role, the university itself had little to do with youth organization. The state successfully hobbled the university but failed to forestall change forever.

# CHAPTER 8

# CONCLUSION

## Introduction

This dissertation examined the climate of repression within which the Faculty of Economics and Political Science that seeks to acquire, disseminate, and produce knowledge. The authoritarian state has placed significant constraints upon the university that include politically-influenced appointments in key positions by the state, laws aimed at regulating what can be taught and how, a security presence on campus that promotes self-censorship and can enforce rules against student organization, and controls research. Academics within the Faculty are generally concerned with the quality of research and education within the context of state repression and tend to seek networks that are outside the control of the state. These knowledge networks are best described within a framework of the bridging metaphor of social capital. Spontaneous organization and reformist movements can only escape control of the state by moving outside state scrutiny. The university is heavily scrutinized by the state and, hence, organization knowledge networks that bridge holes could not be made at the university. While many mass protests led by youth in the world have originated within universities, this could not happen in Egypt.

## Theoretical Concepts

The theoretical concepts outlined in Chapter 2 elucidate how the Faculty of Economics and Political Science is impacted by an authoritarian state. In order to fully appreciate what confronts the Faculty, we must develop an appreciation of an authoritarian state and its sheer persistence in the Arab World. Universities generally seek to acquire, disseminate, and produce information as *The2003 Arab Human Development Report* outlines and this is the mission that led to the founding of Cairo University. The question of how academics seek to accomplish this mission within the confines of an authoritarian state that perceives a wholly different function for the university was something that I explored through my qualitative case study of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University. Finally, the social capital concept helps elucidate both how the state controls the university and how academics as well as students try to escape that control. In the following pages, I will explicate how these concepts serve to help us understand the lived reality of academics at Cairo University.

### Authoritarian State

Structural theories advance explanations of the persistence of the authoritarian state in the modern Arab Middle East that do not dismiss Western concepts. As such, they help provide explanations that can explain exceptionalism without relying on huge categories such as culture or religion that tend to carry contradictory values in any case. For the purposes of this dissertation, Bellin's discussion of factors that can inhibit or promote democratic transitions provide the best explanatory value. Arguing that the prerequisites to democratization better explain failures to consolidate democracy than to explain

failures to initiate democratic transitions, she relies on Skocpol's argument that revolution depends upon state capacity to maintain control over the means of coercion to better explain the marked resistance of Middle Eastern regimes to democratic transition. Bellin, here, applies Skocpol's examination of social revolution to the far more frequently encountered political revolutions. She outlines four factors to explain the conditions that will cost a state's coercive apparatus the will or capacity to maintain its grip on power. These include fiscal health, international support networks, institutionalization of the state security apparatus, and popular mobilization.[144]

In addition to adding explanatory leverage over how and why the political revolution of Egypt's Arab Spring unfolded, these factors also impact the university as my interviews and secondary research have shown.

Fiscal health generated a great deal of commentary from many of my interview subjects at all levels. While graduate students everywhere complain of lack of funding, complaints from Assistant Professors and Full Professors clarify the true dimensions of the problem. Assistant Professors complained of too little pay which drove them to seek other sources of income. The lack of pay is not solely a problem of mismatch between perceived worth and pay[145] but also impacts the time and attention professors can give to students and their own research. The lack of funds for libraries and databases was addressed at all levels and sorely impacts how the university can function. Lack of updated materials and translated materials meant professors struggling to teach relevant material and students struggling to understand anything. Finally, full professors worried over the future quality of underfunded and overcrowded institutions.

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[144]Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism": 143-146.

[145] This gap is also a problem. Overcrowded classrooms and heavy teaching loads are not adequately compensated making academia a less and less attractive position.

Keeping the university starved for funds with the state as the sole source of funding contributes to the depoliticization of the university. Research need not be actively blocked if academics can be hampered by time constraints due to work overloads and if libraries and databases are simply not available. Self-censorship and censorship of students will be undertaken by those who believe in the dissemination of knowledge when the choice is between maintaining a job or not. Further students are taught not to question too much in the atmosphere where the state provides free education but maintains control over what can be taught and how. While lack of funding is not in and of itself enough to depoliticize the university, it does contribute to a repressive atmosphere wherein knowledge must be in service to the state that grudgingly funds the university.

While international networks serve valuable educational and research purposes for graduate students and professors at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, they also serve as something of a safety valve. The most discontented can leave. When money is of most concern, quite often the Gulf states will hire for much more pay than Egyptian national universities. For those most concerned with freedom of inquiry, the West may prove alluring and no few Egyptian academics actively seek work in the West. Even more frequently professors will seek research positions and pursue networks that offer them professional advantages in their efforts to acquire and produce knowledge. International networks were profoundly positive for each individual I spoke to, but did contribute to depoliticization as those who were most unhappy with the system were more likely to seek ways to leave it than to try to change it.

Institutionalization of the security apparatus tells us something about coercive capability and will. Better institutionalized systems generally have fewer personal linkages with a particular regime and may not see their futures as particularly linked to that of the regime. However, the security presence on campuses proved deleterious to the pursuit of knowledge and inhibited activism. The threat of security intervention was pervasive and promoted self-censorship. In addition to cumulative achievement as a prerequisite to advancement in academia there must also be a very strong awareness of the opportunity costs of political activism. Many choose to avoid political activism or pursue activist linkages elsewhere than campus as a means of keeping activism outside the control of the state. Why, however, is the Egyptian state able to exert so much control despite high institionalization? The answer appears to lie in politically strategic appointments. University presidents are appointed by the state and deans are appointed by the president. Security personnel are watched as much as they watch. A relatively well proceduralized system such as the Faculty of Economics and Political Science need not be thoroughly corrupted to be disrupted by the state presence and fearful of the state security apparatus located in every Faculty at the university.

With an active security presence and strategic appointments of certain administrative personnel popular mobilization does not have much opportunity to take hold. While undergraduates have tried to stage demonstrations, the costs are very high and they can be followed home by security and their futures threatened. Indeed, a record of political activism could destroy an academic future as well as lead to unpleasant consequences for a student and a student's family. Hence, a real threat of popular mobilization too costly to contain within the gates and fences of Cairo University was unlikely to ever take place.

Knowledge Society

*The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* cites the knowledge deficit as one of the key contributing factors to the failure of strong economic development in the Arab World. Utilizing the concept of the knowledge society, *The Report* describes the knowledge society as one wherein knowledge can be freely acquired, disseminated and produced.

These functions are ones that are ideally pursued by universities. Cairo University was founded as a liberal arts institution and research was considered a cornerstone of its mission. The Nasserist state most strongly co-opted Cairo University to promote technical development and knowledge for the sake of the state. This cooptation of the university by the state has persisted and strongly effects how professors and graduate students acquire, disseminate, and produce knowledge. While cultural obstacles certainly exist, the people I interviewed at the Faculty of Economics were most strongly impacted by political obstacles.

Knowledge acquisition is severely impacted by funding shortages and the presence of the security apparatus on campus. Funding issues are primarily responsible for a decrease in the quality of education offered. Egyptian students are also habituated to the learning method of rote memorization well before they enter the university. Along with a lack of resources for education, strategies of rote memorization mean that knowledge is acquired purely for instrumental reasons and not simply for the sake of knowledge. However with the youth role in the Arab Spring of 2011 now firmly established it must be acknowledged that young people are likely more acquisitive concerning knowledge

than professors might have thought. They sought information online and internationally instead of through the university, thus making the case for obstacles to knowledge acquisition at the university problematic, much firmer than it might have been otherwise.

Classroom discussions are as applicable to knowledge dissemination as to knowledge acquisition. Students cannot freely voice their opinions. While the security apparatus can certainly cast a pall over any kind of free and open discussion, professors may implement their own red lines. Knowledge dissemination is constrained by the state in two ways. Fear of security interference limits what can be taught and the exam process limits how it can be taught. Laws dictating scrutiny of imported books are further problematic for the knowledge dissemination and acquisition processes.

Statistical research, regulated by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics or CAPMAS, as well as other research, is constrained by state regulation and interference. It can be an active interference as with CAPMAS or an indirect interference as academics choose not to pursue research that could leave them vulnerable to either state or society. The idea that knowledge should be of immediate use to or in service to the Egyptian state further complicates knowledge production. Initially promoted most strongly by Nasserist ideology, the idea that knowledge should serve the state remains an obstacle to viewing knowledge and research as goods in and of themselves. Hence, the university within this view should provide knowledge that promotes the power and advancement of a developing postcolonial state. The idea of using knowledge in service to one's country is not necessarily problematic for most academics. However, many do object to the idea that the state should control, oversee, and ultimately determine what knowledge is of use. All too frequently a ruling regime can confuse its own power

maintenance with the good of the state and the controls exercised over students and faculty at Cairo University suggest that precisely that occurred in Egypt.

Social Capital

The concept of social capital helps us ascertain the impact of the state upon university faculty in two ways. First through discussion of how proceduralization and rationalization[146] and trust, we can begin to understand how and why professors and graduate students I interviewed learned who and what they could trust. Procedures within the Faculty were quite well rationalized and strongly adhered to and that did produce trust in processes but that trust failed where the state could appoint personnel[147] and where the state security apparatus intruded.

State security, located within every Faculty, had the power to dismiss the appointment of graduate students to T.A. if they had pursued political activism. My informant knew of no such cases but assured me that it was a fear. Hence, students could choose to be an activist or pursue academics. You cannot do both. Further graduate students are warned away from security personnel as even perceived complicity could cost them trust from their peers and professors, thus inhibiting their acquisition and production or learning and research of knowledge.

The second way social capital promotes our understanding of the lived experiences of Cairo University within an authoritarian state is through the metaphor of bridging. This type of social capital, which shows where holes are spanned or bridged in networks, can bring in better access to resources is thus very strongly pursued by academics. However,

[146]Proceduralization and rationalization also contribute to the institutionalization that Bellin asserts as an important determining factor concerning democratic transitions.
[147] Indirectly in the case of deans as it is the state appointed university president who appoints deans.

due to the constraints of an authoritarian state, many of their most productive networks linked to other academics in other countries, to other internationally sponsored research centers, and, indeed, simply to other academics. While professors and graduate students often had low regard for the suspicious masses, they also distrusted nonacademics. The state strategy of fragmentation worked fairly well for quite some time.

## The Egyptian Revolution and the Irrelevance of the University

Although college-educated youth had a strong presence in the demonstrations at Tahrir Square, the university was largely irrelevant. Activists pursued knowledge from international organizations such as the Serbian group CANVAS and linked with other protest sectors in order to increase the costs of repression to the military while lowering the costs of meeting certain demands. The university could not be used as a site for popular mobilization or serve as a site where activists could acquire the knowledge they needed to successfully demand the ouster of longtime president, Hosni Mubarak.

State strategies that depoliticized the university were by and large successful. The state security presence and strategic political appointments quelled student activism. Self- censorship and known redlines meant that academics were not disseminating useful information. Research into how reform should proceed was also dangerous as the case of SaadEddin Ibrahim illustrated. In short much of what the university had been founded to do was lost due to the constraints exercised by an authoritarian state. Cairo University had once been the site of nationalist activism against British rule as well as a site of leftist activism and Islamist activism. An authoritarian state had increased its control over the

university and contained activism within the university but failed to completely contain opposition to the regime.

## Contributions and Suggestions for Further Research

Although the methodology employed for the study of how a university is depoliticized is not normally used to create generalizations, this dissertation does yield ideas that suggest fruitful lines of research. A single-N case study is usually inductive in nature and research methodologies that rely upon interpretation of complex lived realities can be used to generate hypotheses to test across other cases. This dissertation's case study of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University is similarly inductive, examining the role played by an authoritarian state on the acquisition, dissemination, and production of knowledge is no exception. The subordination of the academy to the state as well as the conceptual linkage between bridges and holes suggest further and quite productive lines of research.

### Subordination to the State

Strategies that served academic efforts to do what they could to accomplish tasks usually associated with a university and articulated as essential to a knowledge society by *The 2003 Arab Human Development Report* promoted depoliticization as wanted by the regime. Comparisons with other authoritarian states within the Middle East as well as outside of it could inform us as to whether the specific type of depoliticization found in Cairo University is common amongst authoritarian states. While depoliticization of university faculty is common in modern democratic states also, the specific kind of

depoliticization found in Cairo University is more strongly associated with state pressures than societal ones as may be found in American universities. Hence, a comparison with universities in other authoritarian states might yield useful information.

While a comparison with Tunisian universities under the rule of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali with Egyptian universities under the rule of Hosni Mubarak would allow a better test for the correlation between an authoritarian state and a specific type of depoliticization, a comparison of Egyptian national universities under authoritarian rule with some of the new universities sprouting up in the Gulf states and the U.A.E. in particular could yield valuable information about whether it is possible to pursue a knowledge economy via the university without a commitment to a knowledge society or 'knowledge for knowledge sake.' States that are currently or previously authoritarian, such as China, South Korea, and Taiwan, might be useful as comparisons wherein economic success and integration into the world economy occurred with excellent educational systems in authoritarian states that were also interested in maintaining a sense of political apathy amongst the people. These states, however, have seen more unrest emerge from within universities and, hence, might yield useful understanding of the relationships between authoritarian states, universities as knowledge societies, and economic development.

Postrevolutionary Egypt and Tunisia could be quite usefully compared with Eastern European states and the postcommunist restructuring and reevaluation of universities. Possible future trajectories concerning the role of universities and the role of the state might be postulated from any such study. Eastern European universities underwent substantial reevaluation as political indoctrination became an anathema in the educational system. Here, again, some East Asian comparisons might be useful and of particular use

might be an Egyptian and Indonesian comparison. The role of a faltering international economy and the suffering of the masses are implicated in the Indonesian overthrow of Suharto as much as they are implied within the context of the recent Egyptian ouster of Hosni Mubarak. Moreover, both are predominantly Muslim states but contain quite different cultures. The commonality of politics and religion but complete difference of culture would yield a useful comparison that could test the relationship between a postauthoritarian state and the university.

These comparisons with Tunisia or with Eastern European universities or, indeed, universities in South Korea where student movements were once vibrant could well advance our knowledge about the role of the university in mass social mobilization. Democracies contain their own methods for marginalizing academics and university students. Investigation of how marginalization of campus activism might occur amongst countries that make the transition from authoritarianism to democracy might provide far more insight into how various regime types manage dissent overall and the probability of universities becoming permanently marginalized from social movements. Current events surrounding the various branches of the Occupy Wall Street Movement would tend to suggest that while activism is strong among university graduates and may occur on campus[148] it might also take place off campus—perhaps for greater news exposure. The questions that can be asked seem almost endless in their possibilities. What is the role of the university in political activism in the future both within democratic and authoritarian

[148] Recent events at University of California at Davis might certainly cause us to question just how complacent universities and university students really are. The numbers of university graduates, graduate students, and professors at Occupy Wall Street protests around the country might also cause us to question the seeming complacency and inertia that has certainly been a part of American academia in recent years.

states? We currently have few answers but many research questions present themselves here.

Bridges and Holes

My work helps us understand the importance of the roles played by the bridging and holes metaphors. While these concepts are not amenable to discovering causal relationships, my approach of an interpretive case study using these concepts contributes to our understanding of how links or bridges across structural holes (non-related institutional networks) can inhibit or promote change. These concepts help us flesh out Bellin's factors of robust authoritarianism as well--particularly with regard to international support networks and institutionalization. Specifically, the metaphor of a bridge spanning a hole has some implications for political unrest or change. Within the context of this dissertation the bridging capability offered by social networking was quite crucial to the success of the Egyptian overthrow of Hosni Mubarak. The role played by individuals, such as Mohammed Adel, to bring in new information that helped groups strategize better may have been even more crucial. As many Egyptian protestors now turn towards the task of building a civil society that can underpin a democratic state, bridges may proliferate. Studying this postrevolutionary phenomenon may well give greater insight into how political protestors turned to building a networked civil society once the protests are, largely, over. However, although Cairo University has recently been the site of protests over some of the Mubarak era controls of state appointed university presidents who then appoint deans as well as the ubiquitous presence of security services, the possibility of the current Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) maintaining restrictions remains a strong possibility. Too there is a possibility

that regimes, both democratic and authoritarian, will develop stronger sophistication with regard to the use of social networking to organize protests and make demands. The most interesting study that could emerge from this type of question though is one that pertains to the ongoing struggle between the state and its citizens or the rulers and ruled to exert control or to evade control. Holes and bridges are not new to the new social networking technology even though that technology has certainly opened up some bridging capabilities. A comparative historical study of the role of pamphlets, cassette tapes, fax machines as well as new social networking technology could yield much better information concerning demands for reform, counter-reform, and state mechanisms for control.

In a different vein, an interesting use of these concepts as they pertain to young Afghan college students suggests itself as an interesting study as to how "bridges" might be used to span "holes." The American University of Afghanistan was founded in 2006 and is working hard to enroll more female students and graduate the ones already present without losing relevance to the young men who are enrolled and already envision shared leadership with their female classmates. Within the context of an Alumni Association founded by a member of the graduating class of 2011, a study could be constructed that revisits AUAF graduates and the links they have formed with the broader Afghan society as well as the broader international community. As graduates of an American university and as a highly educated group of Afghan men and women, they are aware of their own uniqueness within Afghanistan and their obligations to building a state out of a war torn and desolate area.

The current initial graduating classes are keenly aware of their responsibility to Afghanistan and its state and society. They would be an extraordinarily interesting group to test the utility of these concepts of holes and bridges to explain change. Revisiting this extraordinary group of young men and women over the years through an Alumni Association could yield quite valuable information concerning the role of educated elites in society and politics and how it changes through groups of educated men and women reaching out over societal holes. As these young people increasingly move into governmental positions their participation in a longitudinal study may tell us more about how the state may place more controls on ICT technologies. Despite the relative backwardness of Afghanistan, the current generation of Afghans is tech-savvy like their youthful counterparts around the world. It would be interesting to see how they use that over time.

## Conclusion

The qualitative case study method is designed to elicit a great deal of information concerning daily lived realities. My interview subjects gave a great deal of information about how they go about acquiring, disseminating, and producing knowledge within an authoritarian state. The strategies they used to pursue academic careers within those constraints made them ineffective at organizing opposition or disseminating knowledge as to how to heighten popular mobilization. Strong popular mobilization can contribute to changing perceptions of the costs of repression. Their strategies also increased their detachment from the masses as international networks or bridging social capital that could bring them new knowledge and opportunities were pursued far more strongly than dangerous local associations.

Theoretical concepts used in my dissertation help explicate how the authoritarian state impacts the Faculty of Economics and Political Science. A university is often ideally envisioned as a small knowledge society and the *2003 Arab Human Development Report's* factors of acquisition, dissemination, and production help us focus on precisely how an authoritarian state can affect the mission of a university. An examination of the authoritarian state promotes understanding of the state and the failure of democratic transitions, until the Arab Spring of 2011. Social capital gains us insight into where control is exerted and how it is escaped. These same factors and concepts also elucidate what changed and why in 2011. It also makes the irrelevance of the university apparent as well as explicating how the state successfully depoliticized the university.

## APPENDIX

## QUESTIONS ASKED

1. Could you please describe your educational process?
2. What made you decide to become a scholar?
3. What is the hiring process like at this university? Would you describe your own experience?
4. What are the institutional procedures for promotion and tenure? Are these procedures followed? Is this a benefit or a problem?
5. Do you expect any factors other than merit to impact promotion/tenure? Why or why not?
6. Does the University support your research? If so, how?
7. What kind of teaching duties are expected of you? What do you think is the role of the instructor at the university?
8. Describe for me the ideal relations between instructors/professors and students.
9. What are your relations and interactions with students like?
10. Describe for me the ideal relations among junior and senior faculty. What is your experience in this regard?
11. Are you a member of any academic associations? Which ones? How do they contribute to your development as a scholar and your career?
12. Are there any associations you would advise someone junior to you to join or steer clear of? Which ones? Why?
13. Have you attended conferences in other countries? Which ones? Do you think multinational ties among scholars promote understanding and knowledge? What could be done to promote the scholarly exchange of ideas and knowledge, in your view?
14. Describe your relations and interactions with scholars (a) in your department (b) faculty (c) university (d) national colleagues (e) regional colleagues (f) international colleagues.
15. In your view what is the support for free academic inquiry and debate at each of these sites (see previous question) and the broader non-academic community around the university?
16. In your view, what is the role of the university in the broader community?
17. Is the university an appropriate place to promote the utility of knowledge in the broader society? Why or why not?

18. What should scholars do, if anything, to contribute to the communities they live in?
19. Do you participate in any community associations? Why or why not? Is it common for scholars to actively engage with the local community?
20. What challenges do you see in your own institution of higher education with regard to scholarship? What challenges are presented by local communities? Do you feel constrained concerning academic inquiry? Where do these constraints come from?
21. What kind of supports are there or encouraging trends towards the support of scholarship institutionally and communally?

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